Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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POLL RESULTS

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, what's your level of optimism for 2009?

1	23
2	15
3	38
4	20
5	20

Sunday, January 11, 2009

104 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

More Attacks

Israel warned of a wider offensive in Gaza despite frantic diplomacy to end the bloodshed.

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Golden Globes

Golden Globes organizers are promiseing their show would be back, bigger and better than ever.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

"There can be no reasonable doubt...that the forced removal of two-thirds of the...private sector workforce of three very small islands isolated in the Pacific will cause serious injury to that economy, and that it cannot be reconciled with any meaningful right to 'local self-government' as guaranteed by the Covenant."

CNMI: US govt ignores arguments

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

'Federalization's labor provisions violate Covenant'

The CNMI, in its response to the U.S. government's motion to dismiss the preliminary injunction on certain labor provisions, argues the United States mischaracterizes the Commonwealth's claims.

The United States asserts that the entire action relies on economic harms, but in fact, according to the CNMI's response, the action alleges breach of contract between the U.S. and Commonwealth.

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The U.S. government in its motion to dismiss the federalization lawsuit did not dispute the arguments of the lawsuit but simply ignored them, according to the CNMI government's response to the United States' motion to dismiss.

Willens

Howard Willens, special legal counsel for the governor, and lawyers for Jenner & Block LLC filed the response on behalf of the CNMI government on Friday. A response to the

See CNMI on Page 4

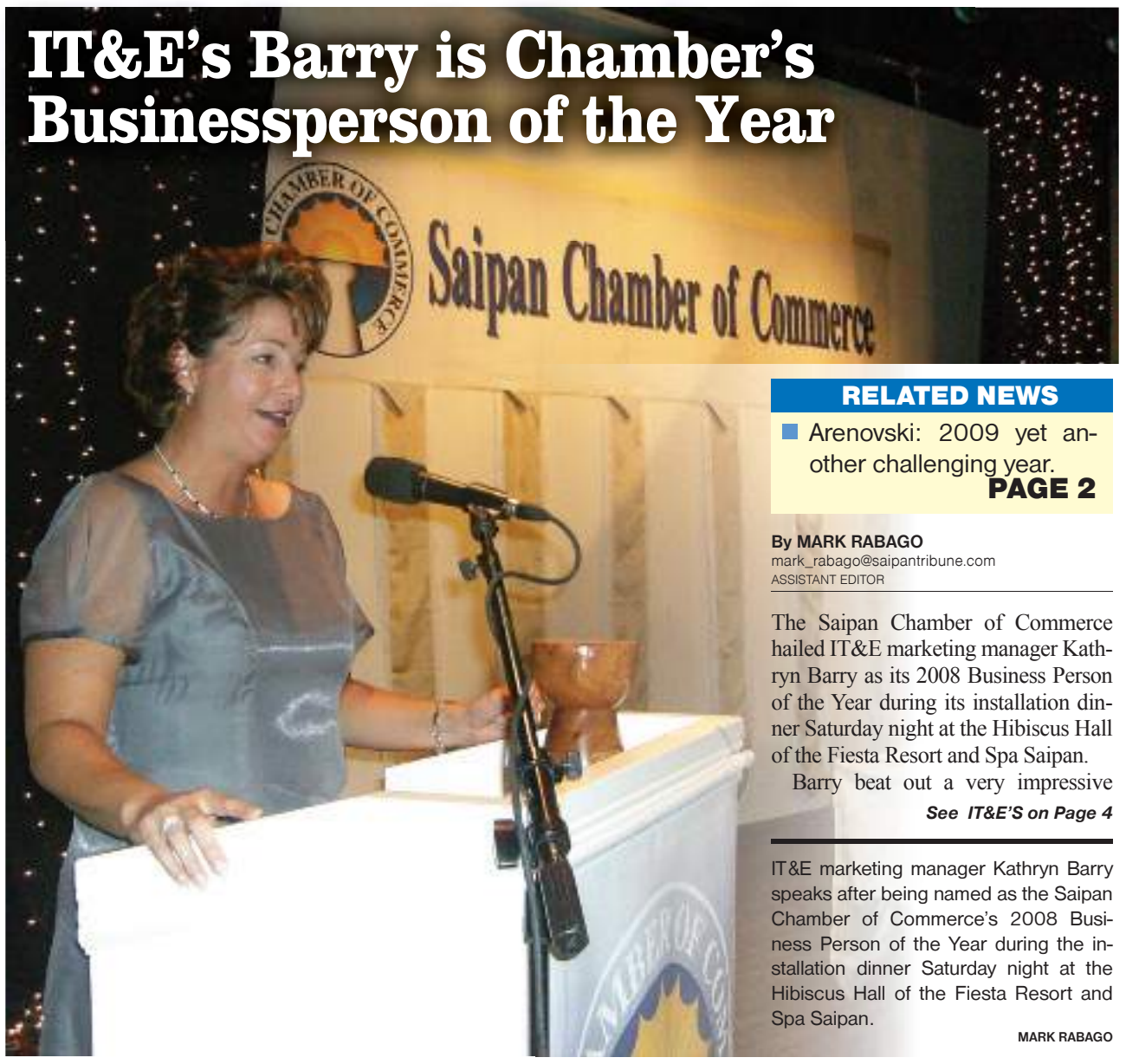
400 Tinian homesteads ready by mid-February

The 400-plus residential homestead applicants from Tinian will be issued their homestead lots in the middle of February by the governor, according to an announcement Friday by Public Lands Secretary John S. DelRosario Jr.

"The Tinian homestead lot issuance would be dovetailed with over 500 resi-

See TINIAN on Page 4

IT&E's Barry is Chamber's Businessperson of the Year



RELATED NEWS

- Arenovski: 2009 yet another challenging year. **PAGE 2**

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce hailed IT&E marketing manager Kathryn Barry as its 2008 Business Person of the Year during its installation dinner Saturday night at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

Barry beat out a very impressive

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IT&E marketing manager Kathryn Barry speaks after being named as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 2008 Business Person of the Year during the installation dinner Saturday night at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

MARK RABAGO

CNMI 5-year economic development plan readied. **PAGE 5**
Commission lays out $372M infrastructure projects. **PAGE 6**

Local

Arenovski: 2009 yet another challenging year

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

MARK RABAGO
Delta Management Corp.'s James T. Arenovski, fourth left, was sworn in to a second term as president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce last Saturday evening during the group's 2009 Installation Dinner held at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall. Joining Arenovski in the photo are from left, Mark Birmingham of Marianas Cablevision, director Steve Jang of Rainbow Color, secretary Kathryn Barry of IT&E, director David M. Sablan Sr. of Century Insurance, vice president Doug Brennan of Microl Toyota director Jay Santos of Triple J Saipan, and treasurer Mike Johnson of Deloitte. Not in photo is director Alex Sablan of Saipan Shipping.

While he congratulated members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce for hurdling a tough year in 2008, second-term president James T. Arenovski said the islands' business community is in for another challenging year in 2009.

"We have a lot of challenges coming in 2009. We had our first non-voting delegate sworn in just the other day and we are now home to one of the largest marine conservation areas in the world. Those two things, along with impending changes to our labor and immigration and tourism, will surely make this an interesting and eventful year for the CNMI," he said in his address during the Chamber's installation dinner Saturday night.

Arenovski, who was elected to a second term, will be joined on the board by vice president Doug Brennan of Microl Toyota, treasurer Mike Johnson of Deloitte, secretary Kathryn Barry of IT&E, and board of directors Mark Birmingham of Marianas Cablevision, Steve Jang of Rainbow Color, David M. Sablan Sr. of Century Insurance, Alex Sablan of Saipan Shipping, and Jay Santos of Triple J Saipan. They were all sworn in by Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

Brennan takes the place of Harry Blalock, who is leaving the CNMI soon, while Birmingham, Jang, and Sablan are newly elected. Alex Sablan and Santos are in the middle of their two-year terms.

Plans for 2009

Arenovski said the Chamber is prepared to protect the interest of the business community.

He then went on to enumerate the group's plans for the year.

"We're broadening our scholarship program to allow our students to attend the Northern Marianas Trade Institute in recognition of the role trades schools will play in changing employment needs of our community. Directors Jay Santos and Alex Sablan are also working to establish an educational program about Article 12, which is certainly one of the significant issues to face us in the coming years. We will continue our efforts to develop pour local workforce and we look forward to NMC [Northern Marianas College], PSS [Public School System], and WIA [Workforce Investment Agency] with this regard."

Resilience

Arenovski also rallied Chamber members to be resilient in 2009 despite the challenging times ahead.

"Many of us who have roots in the CNMI—businesses, families—we're simply going to need to make lemonade out of lemons. Federalization is not going away. And I said last year, we must have a plan and we have to get familiar with how the U.S. runs their immigration laws and visa categories and how it's going to best fit our system. We have the transition period coming in. The time to act is now! Remember there will still be an economy. There's going to be services that have to be provided and why shouldn't your business be the one providing them? Work now to make it so."

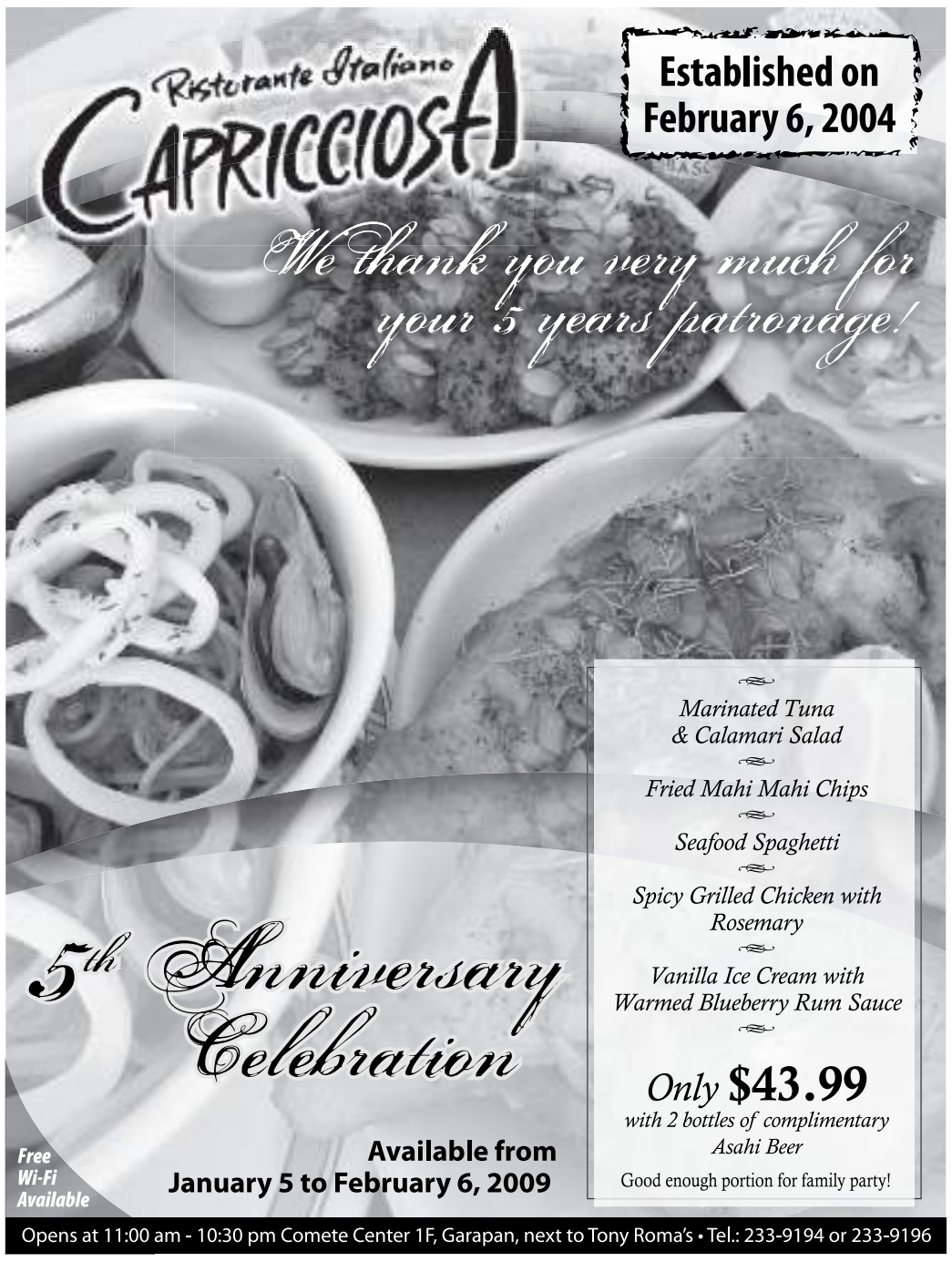
'Vote responsibly'

One key is placing the right people in government and the Chamber president asked his constituents to vote responsibly in this year's elections.

"We must demand the best from our leaders and this will start in the polls this fall. They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting the same result. I challenge you to look for a candidate that have well thought of platforms and stand on issues that prove that they can pave the road for a better future for the CNMI.

"But voting is not the only solution. It will be required of

See ARENOVSKI on Next Page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'Federalization's labor clauses violate Covenant'

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI, in its response to the U.S. government's motion to dismiss the preliminary injunction on certain labor provisions, argues the United States mischaracterizes the Commonwealth's claims.

The United States asserts that the entire action relies on economic harms, but in fact, according to the CNMI's response, the action alleges breach of contract between the U.S. and Commonwealth.

"At its heart, the Covenant guarantees the Northern Mariana Islands the right to local self-government and control over internal affairs," the CNMI wrote. "This is a critical right for a small, isolated island community. In multiple ways, however, the Act violates that established right, and its implementation should be enjoined."

In the original motion, the CNMI government asks that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Labor be ordered to stop from taking over the Commonwealth's labor system. The government reiterates arguments stated in the original lawsuit that the labor provisions of the law, which President Bush signed earlier this year, will violate the promises of self-government and economic development detailed in the Covenant.

A 45-page memorandum submitted in support of the motion argues that the Commonwealth has met all the requirements for a preliminary injunction to be issued-namely, the CNMI is likely to win the lawsuit it previously filed against the U.S. government; the CNMI will "suffer immediate and irreparable harm" if the injunction is not issued; an injunction will cause no harm to the U.S. government; and an injunction is in the public interest.

"Without preliminary injunctive relief, the Commonwealth will suffer devastating and irreparable effects to its economy and the well-being of its people," says the memorandum. "The challenged provisions of the Act violate rights of autonomy, self-governance, and economic development that lie at the heart of a unique and judicially enforceable Covenant, pursuant to which the people of the Commonwealth affiliated with the United States."

In the response, lawyers for the CNMI stated that the Act preempts the Commonwealth's labor protection laws for foreign workers.

"As a result, the CNMI's local requirement that employers must provide health care benefits for foreign workers (who constitute almost one-third of the islands' small population of less than 60,000 people) and its local administrative mechanisms for resolving labor grievances will be displaced, placing a huge burden on the Commonwealth's one hospital and local court," the response said.

Moreover, the immigration act retroactively imposes federal immigration to the CNMI, according to the response.

"…rendering workers lawfully admitted to the Commonwealth subject to removal as 'illegal entrants and immigration violators.'"

This is the final reply to the preliminary injunction. The U.S. does not get a chance to respond.

Islandwide outage experienced Saturday

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The island was without power for approximately two hours late Saturday morning into the early afternoon

Officials from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. could not be reached for comment over the weekend on the cause of the outage.

The last islandwide outage occurred on Dec. 22, when an electric pole carrying primary lines in Kagman fell, tripping Power Plant 1, 2, 4 and the Aggreko generators. The outage lasted for about 2.5 hours.

Since the Aggreko generators came on line in September, islandwide outages have been reduced significantly, and when outages do occur they are not from lack of power generation, but instead from power distribution.

Gov. Benigno Fitial has continually listed the failings of the Chalan-Kiya distribution facilities as one of the reasons for CUC's state of disaster emergency.

"The CUC is facing additional challenges due to the failure of its electric production and distribution facilities," the emergency declaration states. "In particular, the transformer feeding the Chalan Kiya distribution transformer requires immediate maintenance. Its failure could plunge the south end of Saipan into lengthy blackouts, including the water wells in theAairport area and the Agingan Point sewage treatment facilities."

ARENOVSKI

From Page 2

us to take leadership in our industries, in our associations, and in our villages, and need be, our government to effect positive change and ensure a viable future in our islands," he added.

The president of Delta Management Corp. in turn asked the Commonwealth's leaders to help the business community cope with whatever test the year brings.

"We must tell our leaders not to eliminate or weaken the economic tools that we have left and have control over. Specifically, the favorable tax system for individuals and businesses [here in the CNMI]. We complained fiercely when the feds took away our control of minimum wage and immigration. We need to make sure we do not hurt ourselves even more by destroying one of the great attractions for businesses coming in to the CNMI. We must continue to be bullish on Saipan, we must continue to focus on a CNMI that is a beautiful place to be, a desired destination to bring in tourists, and a great place to raise a family," he said.

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Case of missing Tahiti journalist still a puzzle

Family of Jean-Pascal Couraud says he was murdered in 1997

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—The family of a Tahitian journalist who vanished in 1997 says they have no doubt that there was a link between a secret French Polynesian police system and Jean-Pascal Couraud's disappearance.

They have seen new documents in possession of the Papeete-based judge investigating a family complaint dating back to 2004 which alleges that Mr Couraud was murdered.

A letter found in the home of French Polynesia's veteran politician, Gaston Flosse, who ran an intelligence unit with tacit French backing, implicates four men in the alleged killing of Mr Couraud.

His brother, Philippe Couraud, says the letter was written by Vetea Cadousteau, a GIP intervention force member, who feared for his safety and whose death five years ago is now a subject of investigations as well.

"Before we only knew two names. We knew they were four but we didn't know the other two names. Secondly, it appears that two of the four guys are dead - conditions are not so clear - so the judge is looking at this very conscientiously."

Philippe Couraud says his family is convinced that Jean-Pascal Couraud was killed over documents that showed financial links between a former French president Jacques Chirac and a local businessman.

Gaston Flosse has said it's scandalous that the media continues to talk about a kidnapping and murder because more than ten years after the journalist's disappearance, nothing supports such an assumption.

'WE ARE NOW IT&E'

Employees of IT&E wave to passing motorists during the launching of the company's re-branding on Jan. 9, 2009. The company, formerly known as PTI, is now IT&E, in an effort to unify its holdings in the Marianas region and to capitalize on the brand recognition that IT&E already has in Guam and on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

MARK RABAGO

IT&E'S

From Page 1

shortlist of nominees for the plum, which included IT&E executive vice president and chief financial officer Lawrence Knecht, Tan Holdings Corp. vice president for corporate affairs, Century Hotel general manager, and *Saipan Tribune* publisher Lynn Knight, Saipan Sea Ventures owner and operator Anthony Pellegrino, and Pacific Islands Club director of sales and marketing Kanae Quinn.

Barry said she is grateful for the honor bestowed upon her, after taking over the podium from award presenter Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero, himself the Chamber's Business Person of the Year in 2006.

"I'm speechless and that doesn't happen very often. I guess the first thing I need to do is say thank you very much to the past recipients for this honor. You look at the names of the past recipients and gosh… I'm really now on the network, huh?" she said. "I really need to say thank you very much not only to the Chamber but also to the board for letting there be a little estrogen on the board."

Barry, who was the sales and marketing director of Coca-Cola Micronesia before moving to IT&E, said she wouldn't have won the award without the help of her co-employees at IT&E.

"I also need to say thank you to the people I work with everyday. While I'm handing out cake and hotdogs and getting on the radio, the people who make it easy for me to do my job—and I think Harry [Blalock] and I were talking about this the other day on the radio—have their pagers coming off at 3am in the morning because there's a problem in the system or they need to check what's going on and they need to answer their phones. I'm not the one doing that but these wonderful people I work with at the management team and all the employees make it easy for me to be able to market a quality product. So I have to really share this with the people I work with."

Barry also thanked her bosses—IT&E president and CEO Ricky Delgado and Knecht—for providing the vision and direction for the telecommunications company.

She also gave kudos to members working with her in the Chamber's Education Committee, for "helping to make the islands' future a little brighter."

Since 2006 Barry has chaired the Chamber's Educational Committee, which coordinates the Educational Scholarship Program, the Student Career Exploration Day, and "I'm Graduating Soon, Now What?" for high school juniors and seniors.

The current Chamber secretary also gave thanks to her family—her husband Jim, two sons Chris and Bo, and especially her mother, Sylvia Haywood.

"Thank you for my mom—single mom. She's my inspiration. She's always been there for me. It was not easy for many years but she was always there and she always gave me the best of everything. Mostly, she gave me the wisdom that I try to use everyday to make the best decisions that I can. So I have to say, thank you to her as well."

Before relocating to Saipan, Barry held positions at both Coca-Cola Enterprises and Coca-Cola North America. She is also a current board of director of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam, serves on the State Selection Panel for the CNMI Teacher of the Year, and is active in the Rotary Club of Saipan.

The past recipients of the Chamber Business Person of the Year are Asiana Airlines' K.J. Kim (2007), Herman's Modern Bakery and MITA Travel's Guerrero (2006), Century Insurance's David M. Sablan (2005), Continental Airlines' Mark Erwin (2004), Tan Holdings Corp.'s Jerry Tan (2003), Saipan Shipping Company's Alex Sablan (2002), Triple J. Motors' Jay B. Jones (2001), Pacific Islands Club's Wendi S. Herring (2000), DFS Saipan Limited's Marian Aldan-Pierce (1999), McDonald's of Saipan's Joe C. Ayuyu (1999), Pacific Finance Corp.'s Ed Camacho, and EFC Engineers & Architects' Efrain Camacho (1996).

TINIAN

From Page 1

dential homestead lots on Rota around the end of May or upon completion of the survey work," he said.

The secretary said a survey firm has been awarded a survey contract this week. "Its work on Tinian will be coordinated with the director of the DPL when the team gets to the island," DelRosario said.

"It takes about a month or so for the survey work to be completed and once that is done, homestead recipients will be shown their lots and boundaries," he added.

DelRosario noted that the current policy giving recipients up to three years to build their first family home would be extended to a six-year period.

"It is a new policy decision addressing realistically accommodating the economic plight of prospective homesteaders," he said.

The secretary said the survey would commence this week and upon its completion, "all the necessary documents will be finalized for issuance by the governor."

He encourages all applicants to visit the Tinian DPL Officxe for application updates.

"The turnkey housing program in quadruplexes for Saipan would proceed as planned upon completion of the announcement this month," he said. "At issue is the number of applicants surpassing what's available in terms of lots for the first family home and the obvious lack of funds to resolve emplacement of basic infrastructure for new homestead areas."

"It's a real challenge given the number of foreclosures that includes the sale of homes on homestead lots," DelRosario said. "Other than those who qualify for this program, there's the other half whose fate we must resolve with equal vigor."

DelRosario pointed out that the decision to build dwellings for qualified homestead applicants on Saipan is based on past and current experiences involving the sale of homestead lots after quitclaim deeds are issued recipients.

"The challenge for applicants under the new program revolves strictly on needs, not wealth acquisition," he added. ***(DPL)***

CNMI

From Page 1

U.S. government's motion to dismiss a preliminary injunction to suspend certain labor provisions was also filed.

In December the U.S. government filed motions to dismiss the lawsuit and the preliminary injunction.

In its response, the lawyers for the CNMI argued that the defendants do not dispute the central tenet of the lawsuit: that the Covenant is a binding document between the CNMI and the United States enforceable according to its terms. The U.S. government can file a reply by Jan. 23.

According to the response filed, the U.S. government does not dispute but ignores many of the arguments in the lawsuit, including the fact that beginning June 2009 CNMI labor provisions will be trumped by federal law; local permitting of foreign workers will be taken over by the Department of Homeland Security; and millions of dollars in fees generated annually from local labor permits will be lost.

Moreover, according to the response, the defendants do not dispute that Public Law 110-229 will cause the removal of all lawfully admitted foreign workers who do not qualify for federal immigration visas.

"Thus, defendants do not dispute that the Act mandates the ultimate removal of two-thirds of the existing private sector workforce of the Commonwealth," the lawyers for the CNMI wrote. "Here, defendants argue that this ultimate consequence is some years away, and that the Commonwealth's economy also is buffeted by other factors. There can be no reasonable doubt, however, that the forced removal of two-thirds of the lawfully admitted, private sector workforce of the economy of three very small islands isolated in the Pacific will cause serious injury to that economy, and that it cannot be reconciled with any meaningful right to 'local self-government' as guaranteed by the Covenant."

The U.S. government earlier listed four reasons why the federalization lawsuit should be dismissed: the Commonwealth has no standing; the Commonwealth's complaint is not ripe for decision; the Commonwealth's injuries are not caused by the federalization law; and the Covenant allows for the federalization of immigration.

In the argument, the CNMI said the U.S. government's assertions that the Commonwealth has not offered proof of injuries is misplaced at this point in the litigation. A plaintiff must only allege, not present evidence or proof, to withstand a motion to dismiss, according to the response.

Also, the CNMI government has standing to bring the action because, according to the response, "the challenged government action will injure the Commonwealth by violating enforceable rights under the Covenant, and a judgment preventing the government's action will redress this legally cognizable injury."

The CNMI argued the injuries are concrete and specific, and they all arise from violations of the Covenant. Most are not dependent in any way on the potential economic impact of PL 110-229.

Moreover, nothing in the existing U.S. immigration and naturalization laws authorizes federal authorities to create an employer-by-employer, worker-by-worker employment scheme.

'Attacking the governor'

It is unclear why the United States attacked the authority of the governor, the CNMI stated. The governor is not a party to the suit in an official or individual capacity.

"The Commonwealth, not the governor, is the plaintiff in this action, and the governor's standing, authority, or capacity to sue is simply not an issue," the response said.

The CNMI notes that the Office of the Attorney General was consulted before assigning Willens, who has represented the CNMI before and is defined as an Attorney General under his contract with the Commonwealth, and Jenner & Brock on the case. The lawyers for the CNMI attached a letter from Acting Attorney General Greg Baka to Rep. Tina Sablan stating that this is a common occurrence of litigation by states.

The U.S. incorrectly asserts that the lawsuit is for the citizens of the Commonwealth, the CNMI said.

"But the Commonwealth is not asserting claims on behalf of anyone else," the response said. "It is asserting its own claims as a governmental entity and a party to the Covenant, claims that it unquestionably has standing to vindicate against the federal government."

'Not waiting'

The Commonwealth need not wait until the regulations are promulgated to bring a lawsuit, the CNMI argued. Instead, the Commonwealth is challenging the power of the U.S. to authorize the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Labor to regulate the CNMI.

In addition, the 180-day deferral period to the start of the transition period on June 1, 2009, does not negate the immediacy of the injuries, according to the response. Even if it the transition period is extended for five years, most of the injuries asserted will occur at the start of the transition period.

CNMI 5-year economic development plan readied

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

A five-year economic development plan for the CNMI is being readied for submission to the new administration of U.S. President-elect Barack Obama.

This five-year plan—2009 to 2014—is seen as the only solution to the economic crises that the CNMI is experiencing, particularly the death of the garment industry and the decline in tourism, according to Commerce Secretary Michael Ada.

Ada is part of the 18-member body called the CNMI Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Commission that is drafting the recovery plan. It is chaired by hotel association chair and *Saipan Tribune* publisher Lynn Knight.

The Commission presented its initial draft during a public hearing Friday night at the Susupe Civic Center with over 20 people in attendance, including government officials and private sector.

Joining Knight and Ada in the panel were two officials from consulting firm Management Analysis Inc.: company president Arthur L. Smith and project manager Sergio Loya.

Public hearings had been conducted earlier on Rota and Tinian.

Knight said these presentations aim to gather more inputs, comments and suggestions from the community.

The commission hopes to come out with the final draft by the end of this month because the deadline for submission to the Economic Development Administration for a grant is Feb. 19.

According to the commission, the economic development plan has three main objectives:

■ to provide an overview of the current economic challenges;

■ to develop a strategic plan that prioritizes economic development projects according to their ability to create jobs and their positive impacts on the economy; and

■ to utilize all available resources, both public and private, to help the CNMI remain economically self-sufficient.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Lynn Knight, chairwoman of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Commission, presents an initial draft of the five-year plan during a public hearing on Friday at the Multi-Purpose Center. Other panelists are Secretary of Commerce Michael Ada, and two consultants from Management Analysis Inc., Arthur Smith and Sergio Loya.

RELATED NEWS
Commission lays out $372M infrastructure projects. **PAGE 6**

In its initial report, the commission discussed global economic condition, particularly Japan and Korea, and its adverse effect on CNMI tourism such as increasing competition from less expensive Asian destinations, and air service shortage. Local tourism is also affected by the rising costs of power, fuel, shipping, imported food, rising minimum wage, uncertainty over federalization and the possible loss of Chinese and Russian visitors.

The opening of world trade has also resulted in the rising cost of doing business, the commission said, preventing the CNMI from competing with China, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Pakistan.

The islands' garment industry peaked in 1999 with 34 firms, 17,000 employees for an estimated $1 billion in export earnings. The three remaining factories on Saipan are now scheduled to close down this month.

Added to the toxic mix are the rising cost of fuel, drop in outbound cargo (from 140 per week to only five), rise in tariff rates (115 percent in 18 months), and out-migration of the local workforce.

The military buildup in Guam is also seen to foster an out-migration of people from the CNMI work force. However, the commission sees some economic benefits if the U.S. military will only use Tinian for training exercises and from tourism activities of families of soldiers.

The report also discussed internal government challenges.

The problem of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. continues to deter new investment. Meanwhile, CNMI government services must be duplicated to serve three islands.

The commission said that about 40 percent in government revenues have been lost over the past few years.

Record showed that government budget declined yearly in the past five years—$248 million in 2005, $198 million in 2006, $163 million in 2007, $158 million in 2008 and $154 million in 2009.

Other challenges, the commission said, include a shortage in transportation, poor education facilities and staffing standards, health staffing, labor, power and fuel costs, decreasing rate of new investments, and uncertainty due to federalization.

The commission said it is actively looking for the light at the end of the tunnel to maintain self-sufficiency and fix the economy.

The commission hopes to finish its draft within the next few days for submission to the EDA for the grant. It hired the MAI consulting firm last month for this effort.

MAI is pushing for a public-private partnership as an alternative solution to the economic development for the CNMI.

Commission members were appointed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in January 2008 but Ada said they kept a low profile because there was no budget.

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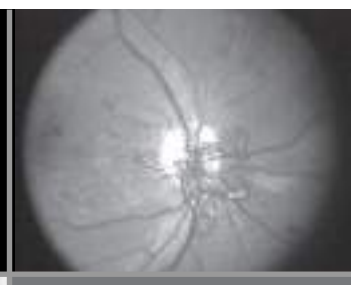

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Registration for Spring classes is taking place from January 12 to January 17, 2009. Applications for admission will be accepted until the last day of registration on January 17. For more information, please contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 234-5498 Ext 1537, or email oar@nmcnet.edu, or visit www.nmcnet.edu.

Commission lays out $372M infrastructure projects

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The commission that was created to draft a five-year economic recovery plan for the CNMI has identified several major infrastructure projects worth of $372 million that could be implemented to kickstart the slumping economy.

The 18-member Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Commission presented the proposed projects during public hearings on Rota, Tinian and Saipan the past week.

But that amount could still rise since the commission has yet to put a tag price on other projects included in the five-year plan.

The multi-million infrastructure projects include improvement in transportation and road facilities, education, workforce capability building, rehabilitation of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and wastewater system, public health, Commonwealth Ports Authority, destination enhancement and other projects.

Commission chair Lynn Knight said these projects are needed to address the challenges that the CNMI economy is facing.

One of the more ambitious projects is the acquisition of a $40 million interisland superferry that is seen to benefit economic development for Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Guam.

A ship building facility is also being considered.

But the biggest project being proposed is the $100 million expansion and upgrading of the islands' existing water infrastructure to meet U.S. quality and quantity standards.

Aside from that, the EPA stipulated order provides focus and direction to meet Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act requirements worth $12 million.

Another part of the plan is a $20 million fund for resurfacing and repaving of secondary roads as well as purchase of additional signs.

Another project worth $6 million is the replacement of 12 traffic light systems and an additional $3 million for the use of solar powered street lighting.

In education, the commission is batting for additional classrooms for full time kindergarten, repairs and maintenance at schools worth $5.635 million, upgrading of IT facilities at schools, and $15 million for the renovation of the Northern Marinas College.

The commission is also eyeing a $600,000 fund for the creation of a small business incubator, including training.

The commission said the rehabilitation and maintenance of the CUC could amount to $6.8 million but they are also pushing for alternative sources of energy such as exploration of geothermal power as a long-term solution.

It is also eyeing $45 million for the rehabilitation of 38 lift stations for the wastewater collections system and the upgrading of the Sadog Tasi and Agingan wastewater treatment plants for up to $4 million in funding.

The biggest project for the wastewater system would be the $25 million Kagman sewer system.

For airport improvement, the Commission eyes $1 million for a PA system, aside from the $35 million renovation of the terminal building that includes $18 million for the arrival area and $4 million for other building renovations.

There is also a plan to renovate the runway by 2010 that could amount from $15 million to $20 million.

In tourism, the commission eyes $3 million annually in additional promotions to stabilize international air service.

Other needed funds include $2 million for revitalization of the Paseo de Marianas by adding shade and bathroom facilities; the building of a $3 million international sports complex; $15 million for the Kalabera Cave project and $1.5 million for the Susupe Lake improvement.

The commission said the funds will come from local funds, federal grants, federal economic stimulus package, private development, privatization, public-private partnerships and private charitable foundations.

EARLY BLOOM SAIPAN TRIBUNE

One of the first flame tree blossoms of the year is spotted along Beach Road in Garapan. Flame trees are usually in full bloom between the months of March and August and are in full splendor in May and June.

Applications sought for distance learning and telemedicine grants

WASHINGTON D.C.—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for grants through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program to provide access to education, training and healthcare resources in rural areas.

Funding for the program is subject to congressional appropriations.

"These grants will increase the range of educational opportunities available to students in rural communities and improve access to healthcare for countless numbers of rural Americans," according to Douglas L. Faulkner, acting Agriculture Undersecretary for Rural Development, in a statement issued Saturday.

"The DLT program provides increased economic opportunity by expanding telecommunications, educational resources and computer networks throughout rural America."

In 2008, USDA Rural Development provided grants totaling $28.2 million under the program to 105 recipients in 41 states.

Complete applications must be received by March 24. For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, see the December 24, 2008, *Federal Register*, page 79041. Materials including an application guide and full details about the program can also be obtained at www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/dlt/dlt.htm or by calling the DLT program at 202-720-0413.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested nearly $111 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 2 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments.

More information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov. ***(USDA)***

Northern Mariana Islands
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NOTICE

ACTUARIAL VALUATION REPORT PRESENTATION OF THE FUND CONSULTING ACTUARY

The NMI Retirement Fund's Consulting Actuary, Mr. Dylan Porter of Buck Consultants, will be conducting a presentation of the NMI Retirement Fund's fiscal year 2007 Actuarial Valuation Report on **Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe.**

In addition to providing information on the Fund's status, Mr. Porter will respond to questions from participants at the presentation.

We encourage the participation of key government officials and interested members of the public at this event in order to gain greater knowledge of the CNMI Government's retirement plan.

/s/
Mark A. Aguon
Administrator

Bill seeks to help nonresident nurses, private medical clinics

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A CNMI lawmaker is hoping to help nonresident nursing graduates of the Northern Marianas College find work immediately after graduation.

Rep. Justo S. Quitugua has introduced a bill that would allow nonresident nursing graduates from NMC the chance to work at private medical facilities in the Commonwealth, in addition to the Department of Public Health.

Currently, nonresident nursing graduates from NMC must have two years of experience before seeking employment in the CNMI except for those employed by DPH.

"Unfortunately, the Department of Public Health cannot hire all the nursing graduates of the Northern Marianas College every year, thereby leaving many nursing graduates without job opportunities to gain experience," the bill states.

If passed, Public Law 15-108 would be amended to say that nurses may be exempted if they are graduates from a recognized institution with a degree in nursing science and satisfy licensing requirements in their country as well as requirements set by the Commonwealth Board of Nursing for License Practical Nurse (LPN) or Registered Nurse (RN).

"Nurses employed pursuant to this subsection shall meet all minimum experience requirements for employment as provided by law, except that any minimum experience requirement shall not apply to a foreign national worker who completed the nursing education program at the Northern Marianas College or other approved vocational nursing school in the Commonwealth, passed the NCLEX exam, and is employed on or before December 31, 2009, in a nursing position at the Department of Public Health or a private medical clinic in the Commonwealth."

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-033

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) VENTILATOR SYSTEM FOR THE RESPIRATORY UNITY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB09-CDD-036

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2009 • TIME: 11:00 A.M.

"JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES"

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/s/ **PAMELA C. SABLAN**
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kagman community meeting set

The Kagman Komunidat Association is inviting the public to meet at the Kagman Community Center on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009, at 6:30pm. Issues to be discussed include the Kagman sidewalk construction, Puengin Inetnon (Kagman Friday Night Market), future and current CIP projects for Kagman (CIP coordinator Vicky Villagomez will be present), and other current community issues. Reps. Rosemond Santos and Ed Salas will also be present to discuss issues. ***(PR)***

Bayani to host cultural show fundraiser

The Bayani Association will host and launch a Filipino Cultural Show called "Balik-Tanaw Sa Kulturang Pinoy" on Jan. 17, at 7pm, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan.

The two-hour cultural show and banquet dinner presents about 16 creative cultural dances that portray the Filipinos' regional culture, tradition and arts representing the Philippine islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The show aims to instill, showcase, and promote the Filipino culture amongst fellow Filipinos and local residents as well in Saipan.

The CNMI Guma' Ezperansa/Karidat is the chosen beneficiary for the net proceeds of the event. Guma's Manager Lauri Ogumoro will grace the occasion with the Philippine Consulate General officials and other guests. ***(PR)***

Tinian High PTA meeting set

This is to inform parents and guardians of Tinian High School students that there will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 3:30pm at the Tinian Youth Center. All parents and guardians are encouraged to attend this important meeting. Call Herman Hofschneider, Carla SanNicolas, Lynette Hofschneider or Rose Lazaro if you have any questions. ***(PR)***

MHS Class of '88 meeting set

This is to remind the Marianas High School Class of 1988 on their meeting will be held on Friday, Jan. 16, 2009, at the residence of Melvin P. & Eleanor A. Cepeda in As Lito. ***(PR)***

OES PTSA meeting set

The Parents Teachers Student Association officers of Oleai Elementary School would like to inform parents and guardians of Oleai Elementary School students that there will be a PTSA meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009, at 6:16pm in the school cafeteria. ***(PR)***

WSR Elementary School January events

Jan. 5 Students return from Christmas break

Jan. 6 STUCO meeting, 2:30pm room D-5, Parent Advisory Council meeting, 6pm, WSR Library

Jan. 7 Parent Literacy Night (Partners in Print Opening Night) with Kindergarten parents, 5:30pm, WSR Library

Jan. 12 Flag ceremony, 8am.

Jan. 13 PTSA meeting 6pm, WSR cafeteria

Jan. 15 Parent Literacy Night Workshop #2 (Kindergarten Parents) 5:30pm, WSR Library

Jan. 16 Mrs. Mary Jane Lime's class visit to dentist (8-11am)

Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Day Holiday (no classes)

Jan. 20-21 ased at 12pm), Reading first assessment testing (teachers will set appointment)

Jan. 20 Ms. Paulette Tudela's class dentist visit (8-11am)

Jan. 21 Ms.Dorina Castro's class dentist visit (8-11am)

Jan. 22 WSR school-level science fair judging, Ms. Martha Mendiola's class dentist visit (8-11am), parent literacy night workshop #3 (Kindergarten parents), 5:30pm, WSR Library

Jan. 23 WSR school-level science fair viewing (open to the public), Mrs. Divine Dela Cruz's class dentist visit (8-11am)

Jan. 26 Leadership team meeting, 2:45pm, WSR Library, Ms. Amanda Angel's class visit to dentist (8-11am)

Jan. 27 Spelling bee finals, 2:45pm, WSR cafeteria, Mr. Victor Cabrera's class visit to dentist (8-11am)

Jan. 28 Half-day (students released at 12pm) Teacher professional development, Ms. Monica Pangelinan's class visit to dentist (8-11am)

Jan. 29 Mr. Steve Gilles's class visit to dentist (8-11am), parent literacy night workshop #4 (Kindergarten parents), 5:30pm, WSR Library

Jan. 30 End of 2nd Quarter, 2nd Quarter Report Card Day (Report Card will be distributed to students, unless a parent conference is needed—teachers will make appointments with parents), Ms. Phyllis class visit to dentist (8-11am), STUCO sponsored movie day, 2:30pm, WSR Library ($1 entrance fee)

Jan. 30-31 Island-Wide Science Fair, Marianas High School

HEAD START WORKSHOP CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Marvin Ali conducts a workshop for Head Start teachers and officials called "Introduction to Social Work, Foundations Practice 1: Empowering Families through Assessment, Evaluation, and Intervention" last week. The workshop was also attended by representatives of other government agencies.

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Sewage spill taints A. Samoa harbor

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (Samoa News/PIR)—The American Samoa Power Authority says they are working around the clock to remove petroleum from the waste water treatment plant in Utulei that was shut down Monday evening due to problems that occurred during a transfer of waste from a research vessel docked in Pago Harbor.

According to a statement from the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, issued yesterday, the WWTP began experiencing operational difficulties when wastewater containing high levels of waste oil and grease was transferred from a research vessel docked in Pago Harbor to the treatment plant.

The plant, which is regulated by ASEPA, treats sewage originating from the Pago Harbor area up to Fatumafuti for customers connected to ASPA's sewer system.

Treatment at the plant consists of separating solid particles from liquid. The sludge and wastewater then go through a series of processes in which microorganisms break down the materials. The treated wastewater is then discharged from an undersea outfall into Pago Harbor.

ASPA CEO Michael Keyser said he has been informed that one of the clarigesters (a form of anaerobic digester that treats diluted biodegradable feedstocks) is nearly clean and ready to be put back online.

ASEPA said ASPA notified them of the problem around 5 p.m. Monday, noting ASPA officials reported that an undetermined amount of floatable debris may have been discharged from the outfall and into territorial waters.

Keyser said yesterday, he was not aware of any specific instances of discharge of floatable debris.

ASEPA said early Tuesday morning they were able to collect water samples throughout the Pago Harbor shoreline area. Tests, according to the ASEPA indicated that bacterial concentrations were within normal levels at that time.

However, according to the latest beach advisory issued yesterday by the ASEPA, several beaches within the Pago Harbor area, tested Jan. 6, were found to be contaminated with enterococci bacteria levels that exceed ASEPA water quality standards.

"ASPA is working diligently to mitigate the problem and is keeping ASEPA regularly updated," said the ASEPA.

It is not clear if the enterococci levels at Utulei Beach across from Samoana High School, Gataivai Beach across from the laundromat and two beaches in Aua (across from A&M video store and the stream mouth near the bridge) — are connected to the Monday incident involving the research vessel.

However, ASEPA says the public should not swim, wade or fish within 400 feet of these polluted beaches. The list includes Fagasa Fagalea Beach (near stream); Alega stream mouth, Fagaitua Stream mouth, LMS church and Avau, Oneoneloa Beach in Nu'uuli, Fatumafuti, and Faga'alu Beach (adjacent field).

Swimmers in polluted waters are at risk for many waterborne diseases, some of which may cause serious illness, the ASEPA warns.

'IT IS DONE'
President George W. Bush smiles after using his executive authority to protect several unique tropical marine ecosystems in the South Pacific, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in the White House complex in Washington. The largest of the protected areas surrounds the Northern Mariana Islands and includes the Mariana Trench, the deepest canyon on earth and is believed to harbor some of the oldest known life on the DNA tree. At right of Bush is Benigno R. Fitial, governor of the U.S. Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands.

AP

US to vaccinate Micronesian girls vs cancer

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—The United States will spend close to US$9 million to vaccinate girls in American-affiliated Pacific islands against cervical cancer starting next month.

A regional epidemiologist, Dr Jean-Paul Chaine, says the new HPV vaccine will be for girls 10 to 18 years of age in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

The vaccine prevents the types of genital human papillomavirus that cause most cases of cervical cancer and genital warts.

The vaccine is given in three shots over six-months.

Dr Chaine says the HPV vaccine program was supposed to be launched a year ago, but hit funding snags that delayed it.

Some of the four island states in the Federated States of Micronesia will launch a vaccine drive as early as next month.

In the Marshall Islands, cervical cancer was the second most prevalent cancer in 2007 and is estimated to affect women at a rate six times that in the United States.

Cook Islands see downturn in tourism this year

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands (Cook Islands News/PIR)—The country's tourism industry could be in for a tough time next year, says the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation's chief executive.

While visitor numbers have been on the decline throughout the world, John Dean says that the Cooks is faring pretty well and is only 2 percent down on last year's figures, to November.

Up to last month, a total of 86,053 visitors were recorded as having arrived in the country, slightly down on the 2007 comparative figure of 87,829.

Growth in the New Zealand market this year has been up by around 6 percent, while there has been a small turnaround in the Australian market over the past couple of months.

New Zealand visitor arrivals makes up around 65 percent of the market share to date, up from 52 percent last year.

Dean says the challenge will be to boost the European/United Kingdom market which is down about 10 percent, and the United States. However, with marketing offices in Los Angeles, New York and Vancouver, and the direct LA flight, Dean hopes this will help turn things around in the northern markets.

However, despite predicting tough times in 2009, Dean is confident that the industry will get through the year with everyone on board.

"2009 will be a seriously challenging time for everybody."

Dean says that it will be really difficult to predict trends and the country can ill-afford to make hit-and-run decisions.

But he adds that he would like more industries develop to a stage where they can take the pressure off tourism and help flatten out the highs and lows.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 12, 1999

Local labor pool urged
Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday prodded the business community to start developing a local labor pool to lessen CNMI's dependence on foreign workers amid plans of the Legislature to lift the indefinite freeze on hiring of guest employees. Although the governor underscored the need to employ foreign workers in the Northern Marianas for certain categories, he said the private sector should train local residents to take on the jobs that will be left by alien workers. "I think it's about time that we train our own people," Tenorio said in an interview, "I would like to see the business community started training our local people and take care of some of the jobs."

Support for scrapping of $100K deposit builds
Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes yesterday expressed support on the easing of a cash deposit requirement imposed on foreign investments, adding to growing clamor for a legislation to amend the stringent law in light of the current economic slump. He also shrugged off fear that the removal of the $100,000 security bond may encourage businessmen to set up what he called "shadow investments" and violate CNMI laws. "We need to see this proposed bill move forward, it's beginning to hound us," Reyes said in an interview, referring to House Bill 11-131 which is pending at the Senate.

January 12, 2000

Coalition prevails in House
As expected, the new coalition of Republicans, Democrats and Independents took control of the House of Representatives during the highly-charged inaugural session yesterday packed with hundreds of families, relatives, friends and supporters of the 18-seat chamber. The coalition, comprising 10 members led by former Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, elected the political veteran to a new two-year term to the House's top post, along with Rota Rep. Alejo M. Mendiola as Vice Speaker and Rep. Oscar M. Babauta as Majority Floor Leader. Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider's bid for speakership ended in crushing defeat with just eight votes from fellow GOP partymates, so was Representatives Diego T. Benavente's nomination as vice speaker and Jesus T. Attao's aim for the third ranking position in the lower house.

Fitial wins speakership, outlines economic agenda
Newly elected House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial laid down four major policies he likened to the four pillars of the traditional taga stone during his speech yesterday at the inaugural session of the 12th Legislature. Under the new coalition he formed with Republicans, Democrats and Independents at the House of Representatives, he vowed to pursue better economic opportunities for the CNMI people, educational investments, environmental protection and preservation of island way of life. He also pledged to work with "friends" in Washington sympathetic to the conditions in the Commonwealth to ensure that the island government keeps control of local immigration, minimum wage and custom standards.

January 12, 2001

Scam perpetrators hide behind remittance center
Perpetrators of a savings scam who ran away with thousands of dollars gypped from Chinese garment factory workers were able to get the trust of their victims after hiding behind a remittance license obtained from the Department of Commerce. Winfield Corporation obtained its license to do remittance job middle of last year and started accepting transactions exclusively from Chinese workers in the third quarter of 2000, records from the commerce department disclosed. Based on the report submitted by Winfield Corporation to the Banking and Insurance Division, remittance transactions entered into the company by Chinese workers reached $346,505 in the third quarter of last year.

Teno to attend Bush's inauguration
Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio will be one among the thousands of U.S. officials, foreign dignitaries and other invited guests witnessing the swearing in of President-elect George W. Bush next week in Washington D.C. He is scheduled to depart for the nation's capital on January 17 to attend the inaugural ceremonies next Saturday. The governor, who has received an invitation, did not say who will accompany him to the trip, although a delegation from CNMI is expected to travel with him.

Chamber Installation Dinner Snapshots

PHOTOS By MARK RABAGO

Nominees for the 2008 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year pose for the camera before the start of the 2009 Installation Dinner. From left, IT&E executive vice president and chief financial officer Lawrence Knecht, Pacific Islands Club director of sales and marketing Kanae Quinn, Tan Holdings Corp. vice president for corporate affairs, Century Hotel general manager, and *Saipan Tribune* publisher Lynn Knight, eventual winner IT&E marketing manager Kathryn Barry, and Saipan Sea Ventures owner and operator Anthony Pellegrino.

Musical entertainment throughout the 2009 Installation Dinner came courtesy of the Pacific Winds ensemble.

DFS Pacific Division, U.S. Group managing director Jim Beighley was the keynote speaker of the evening.

Staff of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan serve the 2009 Installation Dinner's appetizer—Crabmeat & Avocado Cocktail. The four-course dinner also included Pumpkin Soup, Caesar Salad, Butterfly Lobster Tail with Basil & Certified Angus Beef Tenderloin.

IT&E marketing manager Kathryn Barry accepts the 2008 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year trophy from newly sworn-in Chamber president James Arenovski.

Newly sworn-in Chamber president James Arenovski presents the 2008 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year trophy to IT&E marketing manager Kathryn Barry while 2006 Business Person of the Year Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero looks on.

Century Insurance's David M. Sablan, left, and Microl Toyota's Doug Brennan sign up for yet another tour of duty for the Chamber in 2009. Sablan and Brennan agreed to serve as director and vice president, respectively.

Triple J's John J. Santos and Marianas Cablevision's Mark Birmingham also make their turn in signing their 2009 "contracts."

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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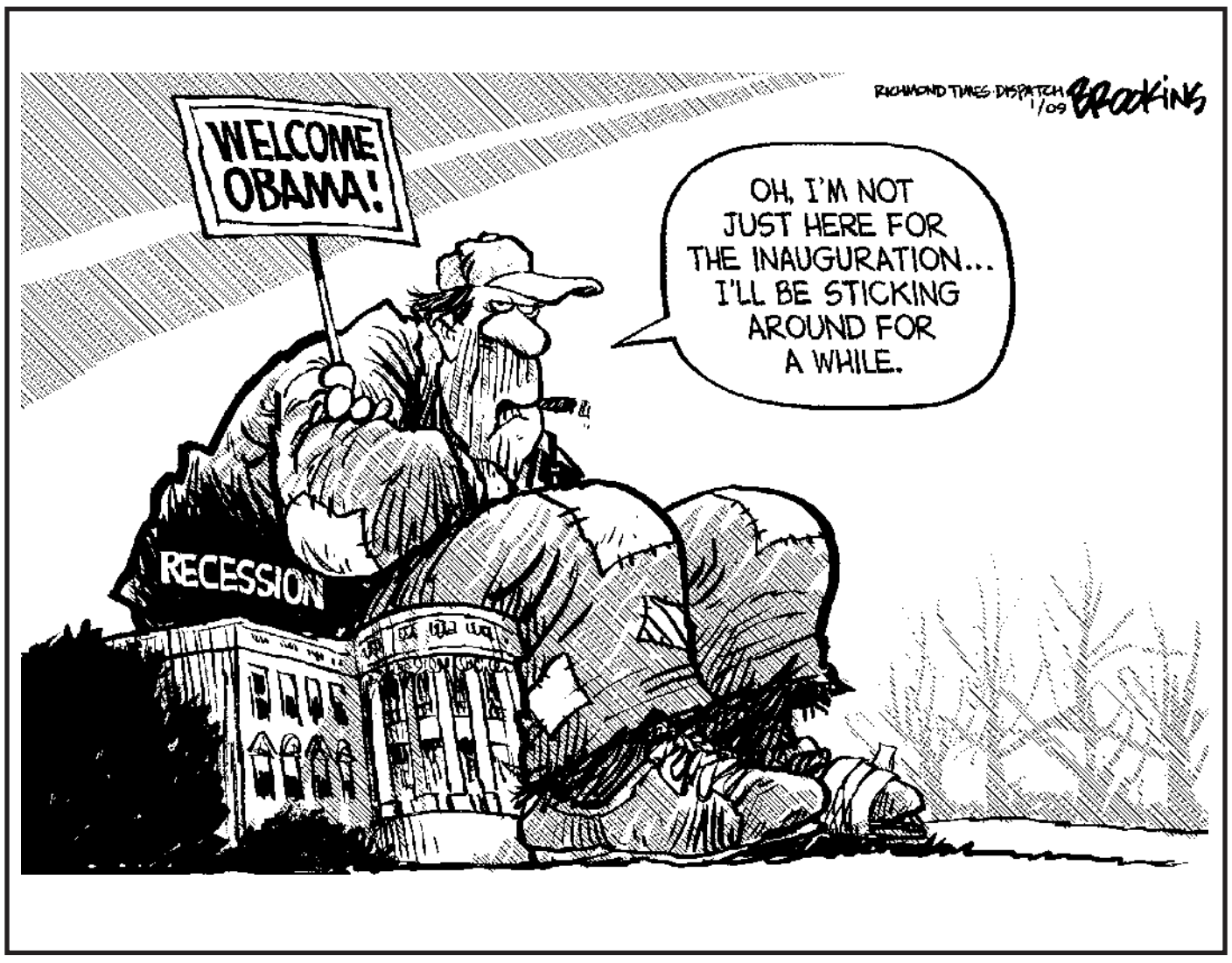

WELCOME OBAMA!
OH, I'M NOT JUST HERE FOR THE INAUGURATION... I'LL BE STICKING AROUND FOR A WHILE.
RECESSION
RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 1/09 BROOKINS

EDITORIAL

Crossroads in Gaza

Hamas's quick rejection of the U.N. Security Council's call for a cease-fire in Gaza might have surprised some in the West who have followed the mounting civilian casualties and the near-breakdown of access to food, water, and medical services with growing concern. In fact, Hamas revels in the Palestinian suffering its terrorism has triggered. Thousands of its fighters have retreated into Gaza's most densely populated areas, where they continue to fire dozens of rockets a day at Israeli civilians. They want nothing more than to draw Israel into an even bigger and bloodier fight—during which, Hamas calculates, Israeli forces will suffer heavy casualties, while the even bigger Palestinian losses will reap a propaganda windfall for Hamas across the Middle East and Europe.

Israel's leaders are on the verge of giving Hamas its wish. Its top leaders also rejected the U.N. cease-fire resolution passed Thursday night; now they appear to be debating whether to throw thousands of reserve soldiers into a street-by-street battle. It's not clear what the aim of the new offensive might be. Some Israelis are calling for the overthrow of Hamas's rule in Gaza; others urge a more limited operation to seize a strip of territory along the border with Egypt, which would allow Israel to more directly attack tunnels through which Hamas smuggles weapons.

Either operation would probably do Israel more harm than good—while raising the already considerable political cost of the war for the United States as well as for Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, Israel's de facto allies against Hamas. Israeli officials have rightly been wary of taking action that would leave their troops bogged down in Gaza—but several of the options being considered would do just that. For now, there is no responsible Palestinian party to which Israel could hand control of Gaza or even the land near the Egyptian border; the Palestinian Authority, even if willing, remains too weak. Nor is it clear that Israel is capable of stopping either the smuggling or the rocket launches by military means. During the last several years before Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, it was unable to do so.

Israel's best option remains a deal with Egypt under which action to stop smuggling would be intensified on the Egyptian side of the border. Israel would like international forces to join that effort; Egypt has refused, though it says it would accept more expert help and equipment. If Hamas is to accept a truce, Israel will be expected to open its border crossings with Gaza to normal commerce.

Any diplomatic settlement to the conflict, either between Israel and Egypt or including Hamas, would be unsatisfactory in some ways. Hamas would remain in power and declare itself victorious, and probably any effort to stop new arms smuggling would not be completely effective. Still, given the tremendous human costs of the war—nearly 800 dead, of whom half may be civilians—and the escalating political cost to Israel and its allies, a deal would be far better than another military escalation. The Bush administration, which so far has done little more than support Israel's decisions throughout this crisis, should now be pressing it to settle.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

The Trades Institute needs your help!

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute needs your help. In addition to all the wonderful support it is receiving from the community, it needs the help from people with skills and time to help the students fulfill their goals. Though it has fine instructors and willing students, NMTI needs more instructors and people's special aid in several areas. Let me explain.

The NMTI is now six months old. It is housed in a large 25,000 square foot warehouse with another 10,000 square feet of yard area located on Lower Base Drive. About 96 students are currently enrolled studying one of the following courses: carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical and sewing. As the institute continues to grow, it will offer more courses to accommodate the needs of our community. In a few weeks, it intends to begin a welding class, an automobile repair course, a small engines repair course, and a culinary class.

However as it struggles to grow and fulfill the aspirations of its students, it is discovering that many of the students have not completed their high school studies. It is the intent of NMTI to encourage these students to resume their studies toward obtaining a high school diploma while they learn their trade. But because many of the students dropped out of school or have never studied on their own, it is extremely difficult for them to study without a tutor.

As you may have read recently in the newspaper, the Board of Education has decided to discontinue the Advanced Development Institute started over 10 years ago. This institute set up classes in the evening where high school dropouts attended. There they studied the necessary courses under teachers to complete the requirements for a high school diploma. Over 300 students completed their studies and received their high school diplomas. They went on to improve their lives even further. Some went on to college, others joined the military, and one of them unfortunately gave his life for our country. With the high school diploma in hand, many found better jobs or at least a fulfillment of a goal.

Taking a GED course and trying to study by oneself is very difficult. First, many the textbooks require a high level of reading ability. Another problem is that the concepts in these textbooks are difficult to comprehend alone. Also studying alone requires a high level of determination and self-discipline. As a result many students enroll in the GED courses, but fall by the wayside in a short period.

As NMTI motivates these students to resume their academic studies, it is asking the community for volunteers once or twice a week to act as tutors to these students. The hours and days can be arranged to suit each group and tutors' needs.

What a thrill to share your experience and motivation with these students so eager to improve their lives and serve our community. You will also enrich your own life as you give to them. Please help! Remember as you give so will you receive. Make a difference by tutoring our young students! Please help by calling the school today. Call the school at 235-6684. Ask for Rose, Vic, or Tony for details.

Another appeal for help is for instructors in various trade skills. As NMTI grows, it requires more instructors to teach the many courses it is planning. It is difficult to find qualified instructors. Share your skills and knowledge with the youth of our community. Since most of the courses are taught at night, it will not interfere with any daytime job. Regardless of your trade or skill if are willing to teach, please contact Vic, Rose, or Tony at 235-6684. NMTI needs you and the students need you.

The NMTI is very proud to announce that it has been certified by the National Center for Construction, Education and Research, which is affiliated with the University of Florida. The NMTI is also closely affiliated with the Guam Contractors Association Trades Academy. As a result, all the textbooks we use are approved nationwide. Graduating students will be able to work anywhere in Guam, Hawaii, and the United States because of this standardization. The students can even move to another state and continue their trade education.

The benefits of using NCCER curricula includes providing a proven training program designed around national industry standards and developed by leading subject matter experts from all sectors of the construction industry. This means that the training offered is equal to the training programs in any of the 50 states.

One of the most exciting activities planned for our students is that shortly they will be soliciting maintenance work to do in our houses. NMTI has formed small groups of the more qualified students. They will solicit maintenance work in various neighborhoods. The purpose is to have the students do actual repair work on actual job sites. All the work done will be controlled by a professional supervisor. The finished work will be guaranteed as to quality and professionalism.

In this method, the students will learn quickly to do actual hands on work. The plan is to enable the student to work in the daytime and to study the theory of his trade in the evening. Also he will earn money to pay for his tuition and have pocket money.

See THE TRADES on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A lesson in assertiveness

By ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rep. Arnold I. Palacios is the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the CNMI Legislature.

As news of President Bush's declaration of three marine monuments made its way across the nation, toward the Pacific Ocean and to our islands, I am compelled to reflect on the odyssey-like experience, which ended in the signing of the declaration Tuesday last week.

To be frank, when I first heard of the proposal in early 2008, I was shocked by the sheer size of the proposed area in the CNMI and plan to restrict access to fisheries resources, mineral resources, and marine activities. I was also alarmed by the intensive publicity efforts launched by PEW. Whether intended or not, the publicity seemed to give the impression that the early proposal was not only the best deal ever, but that it was also a done deal. That proposition did not sit well with many people whom I talked to during the course of the year.

I for one became extremely skeptical of the wisdom of the early proposal. I questioned the necessity of designating such an immense area. I doubted that the best interests of our residents would be served by restrictions on access to the area. As the former chief of Fish and Wildlife, I commissioned several resource assessments studies around the proposed monument areas in conjunction with NOAA scientists and local biologists. From these studies, I became aware of the unique coral reef areas around the three northernmost islands and the compelling need for their protection.

Conservation is an important policy consideration. As a son of the Marianas, I grew up with a keen understanding of the teachings and traditions of our indigenous cultures and the affinity that our people have for our islands and the ocean. A paramount principle in resource management is that we do not go out and exploit resources just for the sake of exploiting. We rely on the ocean's resources for subsistence living. We take what we need, not more. That is instilled in us from an early age given the reality of island life and limited resources. So there was no question in my mind on the importance of conservation and the need to protect the unique geological features of the Marianas Trench and the coral reef systems fringing our northernmost islands. But did we really need a swath of 200 nautical miles around the Marianas Trench to adequately protect it? Did we really need to close or restrict access to these areas?

My skepticism gave way to frustration as it seemed that our questions and concerns were falling on deaf ears. By mid-summer, I learned that the President had given instructions to the White House Council of Environmental Quality chaired by James Connaughton to travel to the CNMI to meet with community leaders to discuss the proposed monument and to get their input. Initially, my colleagues in the House and I viewed the meeting as more form than substance. I was heartened when, toward the end of our meeting, Mr. Connaughton pledged to work with us in the designation of the National Marine Monument in the CNMI. It became clear to me then that our concerns had registered and that the White House and the federal government understood the nub of the opposition of the local community to the initial proposal.

From then on, cooler heads prevailed and productive discussions between Saipan and Washington ensued. I participated, along with the Governor and Senate President, in several teleconferences with Mr. Connaughton as the language for the presidential declaration was being drafted. True to his word, the discussions were not one-sided. I had the opportunity to ask point blank about the policy objective for the monument designation, the timeframe involved before the designation, what should the monument include and what were the unique geological features that should be protected.

The Marianas Marine National Monument as designated by President Bush reflects the candid discussions that I have had with Mr. Connaughton. As a result, we have in the monument a focused ecosystem management approach. The area has been scaled back. There will be 50 nautical mile conservation management zones, rather than the 200 mile EEZ, within and around the three northernmost islands which are already protected under our CNMI Constitution. Residents of the CNMI will have access to the area and traditional indigenous fishing will continue. There will be co-management sharing between federal and local governments and a revenue sharing component on mineral resources. I can safely say that this Marianas Marine Monument is a something I can embrace.

I speak for the House Leadership in expressing my gratitude to Mr. Connaughton and CEQ members and staff for meeting with us before finalizing the declaration. The CEQ, under Mr. Connaughton's direction, took into account, not only my input but those of our other leaders, including the Governor and the Senate President, and incorporated them into the final declaration. One of the key issues for the Governor is local control over submerged lands. Mr. Connaughton made a commitment to assist to the extent that he could on the transfer of territorial waters to CNMI control.

I would also like to acknowledge the following government and independent agencies and individuals who supported our initial position on the Monument: Vice President Dick Cheney; The Association of Pacific Island Legislatures; the 29th Guam Legislature, Congresswoman Madeline Bordallo, Territory of Guam; the Micronesian Chief Executive Summit; and the Guam Fishermen's Co-op.

Because much remains to be done, if there is anything that this experience has taught us as a community it is this: that we need to learn to be assertive, to speak up and articulate our positions on issues that affect all of us. We must do so by engaging in civil discourse respectful of the opinions of others, offering criticism that goes to the substance of issues, while not engaging in personal attacks. This spirit of cooperation and collaboration can take the CNMI a long way. Never underestimate the power of collective action. I am hopeful that the incoming Obama Administration will also be as receptive to CNMI participation and input in the further development of plans and programs for the Monument.

Letter to the Editor

Hold that thought

Kagman resident Jesse Torres purports to lament CNMI residents' inability to vote in U.S. presidential election contests. Hold for two thoughts, please:

1. No taxation without representation: These words, said 8th grade social studies teacher Bill Cromie, fomented the American Revolution. In the case of CNMI residents like Mr. Torres, they might instead be read "No representation without taxation"—given, that is, the fact that CNMI residents (like Guam residents) pay zero U.S. taxes yet receive more per capita federal expenditure of U.S. tax dollars paid by U.S. citizens than any state in the U.S. OF course, the right to vote in U.S. presidential elections is extended to Mr. Torres and all others who reside within the U.S. where they are then obligated to pay U.S. taxes. Question: Do CNMI and Guam governmental officials, employees, and students living in Hawaii, Washington D.C., and elsewhere on the U.S. mainland, pay their U.S. taxes?

2. Race-based rights: Of course Mr. Torres and others of MP descent feel wholly justified in excluding others lacking ostensible blood of NMI descent from owning CNMI real estate. This as they may themselves jet off to Guam to purchase and own land from their Guam-situated MP-blooded cousins who are prohibited from owning CNMI land, or to the U.S. to purchase and own land from taxpaying, financially subsidizing U.S. citizens, in explicit violation of U.S. equal rights purportedly binding upon and within the CNMI pursuant to the Covenant. These, of course, are the same MP folk who seek and receive from the U.S. and its many institutions grant and scholarship funding based on reputed "minority" status characterized by "affirmative action" as they themselves at home as the minority populace within the CNMI affirmatively preclude others from owning CNMI lands.

I last saw and spoke with Bill Cromie around 1971, but there's likely a CNMI situated 8th grade teacher who can provide further details/insight if Mr. Torres and others of MP descent are interested. If not, there's certain to be some 8th grade graduates.

Bruce Jorgensen
Washington D.C.

Moving forward

By ANDREW S. SALAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Andrew S. Salas is a former CNMI congressman and currently vice chair of the Friends of the Monument.

My congratulations go out to all those people who supported the monument idea and, equally, to all those who questioned, challenged and opposed the idea. Every great idea must travel its path from a seed of thought through the rigors of debate and be allowed to grow and adapt into a workable and attainable result. Ultimately, as with all great ideas, the path reveals itself and so does the next step. It has taken many hours, days, weeks, and endless discussions and efforts at public education, but here we are and President Bush has honored our people and their efforts by declaring a Marianas Trench Marine National Monument.

Additionally, Governor Fitial and the Legislature should be applauded for their willingness to meet at the table with the federal government and for their participation in what must have been an extremely challenging negotiating process. Their efforts are just the first step in our much-needed healing process with the federal government. Our leaders' actions show a willingness on the part of the CNMI to be open-minded and capable of finding a middle ground. This process is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through perseverance and cooperation.

I would also like to thank those with whom I agreed to disagree with and acknowledge those who were uncomfortable with the process that took place throughout 2008. However, we must put the past behind us. We now begin a new journey; a journey that will require us to take ourselves through the next steps of this process. It won't be easy and we must continue to be ever vigilant. Allow the past to be in the past and let us come together with *all of our* visions, hopes and dreams and work together further to ensure the greatest possible rewards throughout our community as we move forward.

It is now that the real work begins as we move through the drafting of the regulations process that is expected to take up to two years. Everyone should keep an eye on this process and participate as much as possible. Chairman Ike Cabrera and the Friends of the Monument will continue to actively participate and aim for the best possible benefits for all of our people.

As the Friends of the Monument declared in our vision statement in October 2008, we can see a chance for the CNMI to rebuild our public image and show the world our best side—our natural ocean stewardship practices and our Hafa Adai spirit. Additionally, we are anxious to begin relationships with researchers who are interested in our unique ocean environment and looking to find ways to create unique cooperative opportunities to help educate our children. As Agnes McPhetres, our vice chair, stated during our brainstorming session when we were coming up with a wish list, "[We] want to see our first NMC Chamorro and Carolinian Ph.D. graduates in marine biology become a reality as a result of this monument!"

Today marks a turning point for the CNMI. I believe that our beloved CNMI and her people deserve the best. There are so many positive directions that we can work with from this point forward. Our people stand to re-establish the CNMI's presence on the world stage. I make a personal pledge to continue fighting for the best that is available for all the people of the CNMI.

THE TRADES

From Page 10

This will also create confidence in his ability so that he will learn better and faster.

Anybody is welcome to enroll in NMTI regardless of age and gender. Because our courses are designed in a special manner, a student can enter anytime and also stop for a while if needed. This allows the student to juggle his personal life and study. NMTI does not focus on attendance but rather on attaining competence.

NMTI invites all local citizens to stop by and see what it is doing. And perhaps NMTI can help you start a new career. Come join us. Stop in and say hello to Vic, Rose or me. We will be glad to show you around. We are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 8:30pm.

Encourage your sons or daughters or anyone you feel desires to learn a trade or skill. Even you! This is your institute with one goal—to improve the work skills and work ethics of our local people.

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute is proud to be an integral part of Saipan's training community, using local talent to train more local talent and strengthening our skilled work force, both in quantity and quality.

Please stop by and offer any assistance you can or become a student yourself or recommend someone to become a student. Let us begin our journey to economic independence and pride in the workplace.

The Weather

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°

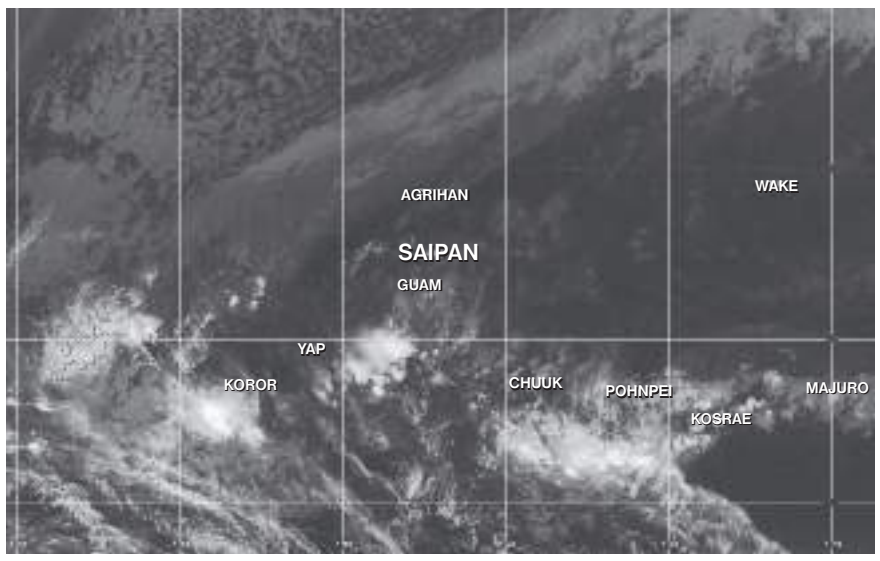
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Yap	Rain	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84	▼77
Kosrae	Rain	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Rain	▲84	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲72	▼59
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲34	▼16
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲59	▼48
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲79	▼68
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼39
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲76	▼52
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲81	▼70
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼64
Miami	Cloudy	▲77	▼59
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲31	▼25
Osaka	Cloudy	▲39	▼31
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲38	▼29
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲38	▼20
Rome	Cloudy	▲53	▼39
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼35
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼46
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲25	▼ 8
Tokyo	Sunny	▲50	▼28
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲42	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, JAN. 11, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area near Minami Tori Shima at 25N154E and extends southwestward to near Pagan at 18N143E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 10N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from Mindanao to 7N130E through weak circulations centered south of Koror at 5N135E and southeast of Yap at 5N145E then turns southeastward to end at EQ150E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring near the trough axis south of Koror, Yap and Guam within 150 miles of a line from 3N130E to 9N145E. Trade winds converging near the eastern end of the trough are producing similar conditions south of Chuuk and Pohnpei or south of a line from 5N150E to 4N160E. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Kosrae and Majuro but south of Kwajalein within 100 miles of a line from 4N160E to 7N166E to 6N174E to 4N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:20AM Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
9:27AM Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
2:49PM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
7:42PM Today	High Tide:	2.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46AM	6:04 PM
Tuesday	6:46AM	6:05 PM
Wednesday	6:47AM	6:06 PM
Thursday	6:47AM	6:06 PM
Friday	6:47AM	6:07 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	7:18PM	7:33AM
Tuesday	8:20PM	8:23AM
Wednesday	9:17PM	9:07AM
Thursday	10:11PM	9:48AM
Friday	11:03PM	10:27AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Does the NMI have a problem with its foreign investment image?

Editor's Note: With several decades of international experience as an economist and foreign investment advisor for development banks and finance institutions in North Africa, the Bahamas, Thailand's Board of Investment and the Inter-American Development Bank, the author offers a perspective and point of view of critical importance to government policy makers who want to encourage foreign investment.

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.

The Dale Carnegie organization conducts a series of expensive seminars for participants who want to improve their management skills. I recall in particular one of the tenets of their instruction being, "You must have earned the right to speak to a group." Meaning, of course, that before one addresses an audience through a public forum—and in doing so occupy their time and attention—one must have something valuable to offer. Interesting advice to remember.

With that observation to establish a point of departure, I would like to advance an opinion for the reader to judge based on my qualifications while asking for your time and attention to consider a matter related to economic development in the NMI.

First, however, a little background in an attempt to qualify for making the assertions which follow. When Kennedy became President he was aware that many of the newly emerging nations in Africa, Asia and elsewhere—all former colonies of France, England and Belgium—had gained their independence and were becoming members of the United Nations (where, of course, they could vote). Many of these new nations were flirting with socialism and communism as an economic philosophy and Kennedy decided that as a part of his foreign policy he would require the State Department to instigate programs, supported by foreign aid, to encourage the concept of capitalism and private enterprise as an alternative to—and a counter of—socialism and communism.

This was the period at the height of intense competition on all fronts of the Cold War. I became affiliated with this State Department program and soon became a crusader for private enterprise and foreign investment. It has almost been a religion with me and certainly a career of more than four decades—that's why I feel so strongly about a positive and successful effort for economic development in the Commonwealth. I carry the intensity of that economic philosophy in thinking about the situation in the NMI and the dire need to stimulate economic growth, partially through the encouragement of additional foreign investment, ideally in the form of joint ventures with local participants.

As I have mentioned previously in this column and for the benefit of those who might not have been a resident of the islands at the time, the rapid economic expansion experienced on the islands during the mid-'80s through the early '90s was a result of being geographically situated in the right place at the right time. The great "boom" period resulted in a rapid development pace that, during normal times, would have required some 20 years or so to achieve. In the CNMI, this development pace was "squeezed" into the short span of five or six years. Those halcyon years distorted the perception of many on the islands who benefited enormously from financial "windfalls" never before experienced on the islands. At one point I calculated there were more millionaires per capita among U.S. citizen residents than anywhere else in the United States of comparable size and at the time.

The foreign investment which fueled the CNMI's economic engine was a direct result of the devaluation of the dollar in relation to the yen at the Plaza Accords in New York in 1986. In the ensuing five or six years, every sector of the economy in the Northern Marianas grew by an annual rate of 16 percent. In all probability the islands will not see such growth again in this century, if ever. Yet the intoxication of easy money though land leases still remains wishful thinking among some that such will again occur. I dare say it won't—not at previous levels—but that's no reason not to try.

In the past the Commonwealth has mostly reacted to investment proposals brought to its attention from the outside. In other words, and with several exceptions such as the various government promotional efforts in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, the effort has been somewhat passive as opposed to being aggressive in seeking out new investors, particularly those from the mainland United States.

When businessmen and women review the business potential of any area, if they are smart, no factor will escape analysis, most of all the so called "business climate" and the experience of other foreign investors. This important review should be kept in mind when establishing the NMI's "investment climate" within which one hopes to attract risk investment capital.

It is worthwhile considering that development itself cannot be "legislated" as is so commonly thought by many on the islands. Only the legal environment known as the "business climate" under which such investment is expected to thrive can be established by an area's legislative body and even then there is no guarantee investment will result, but such legislation is, in a real sense, a "welcome mat."

Future potential foreign investors considering the NMI as a business location will probably discover the abandoned San Roque Mall and wonder why the government, as the owner, permitted such a valuable asset to fall into disrepair. They will no doubt be puzzled over this—after they discover that the original investors wanted out so badly that they sold the facility to the government at a "fire sale" discounted price.

Looking around further and probing deeper—which they are very likely to do unless they are rank amateurs—they may wonder why, after massive injections of federal money either sourced from the Covenant or from outright federal program grants, that the government failed so miserably over the years to properly maintain and improve the islands electric power generating system? They may wonder, "Where did the money go?"

On top of all that I have the impression that those potential investors who care to look deeply enough will conclude that the island's investment reputation has also been tarnished as a result of adverse publicity that has—rightly or wrongly—appeared in the media, on the net and by word of mouth. This ranges from highly publicized crimes against visitors; alleged corruption in government; a recalcitrant legislative body, (at least in terms of working cooperatively with the administration); the Article XII "hangover"; alleged labor abuses; questions regarding the fairness of a jury trial within a small society (e.g., "windfall" awards as in the case of the golf course broken ankle issue); past and present administration's failure to honor their contractual agreements (e.g., Retirement Fund), and the cynicism resulting from nepotism in government, not to mention the bureaucratic "red tape" and regulation and permitting "hoops" investors are required to jump through and the time and expense involved in their attempt to achieve compliance.

There is also the publicity surrounding HB 15-146 to authorize a commission to "revisit the provisions of the Covenant, and examine alternative "political" and economic status options for the Northern Marianas."

It should be realized that any interested potential foreign investor monitoring conditions in the NMI must wonder if they can depend upon the future political stability of the islands and whether the islands will continue to be associated with the United States in view of the apparent dissatisfaction on the part of some legislators that must exist with the relationship and which is severe enough to even hint at a possible change in political status. Those lawmakers supposedly represent the wishes of their constituents so they must reflect their desire.

Those investors who invest in the international arena are well aware of the dangers in risking their capital in unstable economic and political environments and will avoid such areas like the plague. Something for the NMI to keep in mind if it wishes to stimulate its economy by encouraging foreign investment.

I believe the islands have an image and credibility problem as a result of some or all of the above but don't take my word for it. Ask some of the area's longstanding business men and women. Also, ask the Japanese investors who have bailed out of the economy if their reasons were purely economic as a result of market forces or did their decision have anything to do with the NMI's business and investment climate? I'm not aware they have "sold out and bailed out" of Guam, Hawaii, Vietnam and elsewhere to the extent that they have abandoned the NMI. Why?

Just how might the NMI's negative investment image be overcome and enhanced? I frankly don't know, but if its undertaken it will involve an expensive advertising campaign and time to achieve.

Letter to the Editor

A New Year's resolution for political will

Homesteads subdivisions that exist are still not fully developed and people are talking about opening up more. Why the government hasn't done something to finish completing the existing homesteads that are full of empty lots and jungles? Instead of putting people at the back of the line who really can't afford to do something with their existing homestead lot and giving it to someone who can, our government has done what it does best—*nothing*. It is too much like common sense to finish filling up one homestead before opening another one that we can't afford because it will surely need infrastructure.

I can remember moving into my new home in Kagman with no power, no water and no stores or anything. We have two-lane roads in Kagman III that have turned into "one"-lane roads due to the jungles taking over a "paved" road! Opening up another homestead at this point is like buying a cart with no idea where you will get a horse. I'm not against these people getting their homesteads but I am against the "terrible governance" over the existing homesteads that can still accommodate hundreds if the government ever finds the political will.

■■■

A part-time Legislature and elected attorney general is being discussed once again. The only difference is the new proposal for a part-time legislature clearly demonstrates the power of diplomatic efforts to reach a compromise in the best interest of the people of the CNMI. The amazing thing is that it only took one change in the proposed bill to eliminate the loophole for government employment status by legislative members to change people's mind. The CNMI will surely need an elected AG due to the pure dynamics of the politics here, which is still driven by a handful of locals who really process all the political power. Until this power structure is truly dismantled or a perpetual and legitimate two party system evolves, there will always be a problem with an appointed AG. The big question is still the same: Will the Legislature have the political will to govern themselves and place the necessary "checks" on the Executive Branch?

■■■

What about our young adults: Before I begin, I want to make it perfectly clear that this is *not* an attack on the people I'm talking about but an observation. The Northern Marianas College president is already over at the college and now she is the new chairperson of the College Council, which is an organization that advises the college president. Wasn't there anyone else qualified to give them a chance? An island organization has just re-elected their chairperson, which gives that person both titles of chair *and* president. Was there no one else qualified? I truly applaud these people for being selected and I'm sure they are more than capable. But it just reminded me why our youth are leaving and why people get so frustrated with the "politics" of becoming someone on this small island—there is no chance for growth.

We have so many people wearing two, three and four hats because we never give new people a chance and I have seen it over and over again in politics, education and in the private sector. We see the same "retired people" still going from one top job to another top job "at will" but our youth have to leave the island just to find an entry level job. There is not that much to go around on this island and its being hogged by a handful. It's not only the lack of jobs but the lack of any opportunity to grow in the job you have. I'm sure there are other people who could easily fill some of the positions that are being held by people who already have one job but it really gets worse when there is the implication of a conflict of interest. We must make a conscious effort to create more opportunities for new people to get appointments and employee promotions.

■■■

We are still talking about the poker machines being moved almost a decade later, which shows there is no political will on Capital Hill other than picking a fight. It should be clear by now the machines must leave the villages and the only question has been "where." If people truly want them moved to the hotels, which seems to be a consensus, why doesn't the Legislature just create a "legal zone" at La Fiesta, which is right across the street from a major hotel.

The biggest political challenge for our government, may not be their political will but their political know-how when it comes to our national politics," so we must keep praying in church like we do every Sunday for our leaders and hopefully they will eventually learn from trial and error before its too late. We do have some people on Capital Hill who do have the political will and know-how, but the problem is they are outnumbered by the ones who don't!

I'm calling on all citizens that do pray for our leaders to pray for them to adopt the New Year's resolution to have political will and maybe, just maybe, we can get something done and start heading in a direction because we are literally dead in the water. Happy New Year and please find some political will on the Hill!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

Letters to the Editor

GoKILILIGo: A xin yi (heart-full) strategy

Gee KILILI was the original title for this reflection but it sounded too presumptuously familiar and personal in the relational sense, and in the politics of a confined island governance where "who you know" defines who you are, we do not wish to give the impression that we are cozying up into the winter overcoat of our DC rep.

We would rather be identified with the current political movement that seem more attuned not so much to the logic nor clarity of their minds but more to the fullness and warmth in their hearts. *Xin yi,* among Chinese friends, is about being of "one heart" where collegiality is cemented by trust rather than the magnitude of one's promises and patronage.

Obama impresses me as one among a growing cabal of servant leaders who first marches to his heartbeat before anything else. That heart beats the cadence of justice and mercy, service and, yes, love. Now, that love part is a rather quaint notion since the word has been overused and abused through the years, but precisely when seen as a "heart" word makes it abundantly clear that we refer here to the life force itself that makes one's existence go round. We have a few in our island who are livening up our body politic, and I would like to think that Kilili is numbered into this rank.

That Kilili would highlight in his three-sentence introductory paragraph in the congressional record the promise "to work for better education for his constituents" endears him to this "old man" of a teacher. To be sure, education, to the cynical, is the foundation of everyone's political platform, as innocuous and American as claiming that one is for mom and apple pie. But having served with Kilili in the NMI Humanities Council briefly, in my estimation, there is authenticity in the man's actuations. The immediate opening to the portals of his office through cyberspace instituted as a first step to welcome participation from the electorate is a promising step.

As to his office, vivacious Pete A. welcomed a colleague and I from the Immanuel United Methodist Church of Saipan five years ago to the CNMI northwest DC Marianas House when we delivered a copy of the resolution passed by California-Pacific Methodists supporting the Commonwealth's petition for an official delegate to the United States Congress. The resolution made it all the way to the global General Conference of the religious body, was forwarded to its Commission on Church and Society office on 100 Maryland Ave. just behind Congress, and delivered to some 60 congressional delegates who were members of the Methodist fellowship.

Of course, resolutions of this nature are more symbolic than legally compelling but the resolution was an added item to the then growing sentiment to have a Marianas delegate become officially a part of the non-voting delegate pool from the territories, American Samoa in 1981 being the last addition to the federal clan. Mentioning it here is more as a "feel good" luxury rather than a claim that the resolution had any direct effect to the Labor Act that finally instituted the office.

Aside from the fact that our Rep's name onomatopoeically resembles a tickle of a certain body part in the Pinoy anatomy and lexicon, Kilili did receive the endorsement of organized workers on Saipan, whose many members are loquaciously Pinoy, during the year's historic delegate selection. Kilili turns 54 the day before the Obama Citizens' era gets sworn in. Obama's campaign was marked by his call to service, which also has become an annual feature of MLK Jr.'s "a day on, not a day off" holiday. In fact, citizens across the nation are not just attending the swearing-in ceremony this week, they are swearing in themselves as well.

I am reminded of the anecdote about the late Pope John XXIII who would, when confronted by a relevant issue, remind himself to let the Pope know about it in the morning, "until I wake up and realize that I am the Pope!" Citizen's this Monday are swearing themselves into a new level of commitment in the lifestyle of justice and mercy, service and love.

Huff Post writes: *"Barack Obama* is not the only one being inaugurated on January 20th. We all are.... that's not just because Obama has promised to make a call to service "a central cause" of his presidency. It's because this moment in history demands that we stop waiting on others—especially others living in Washington D.C.—to solve the problems and right the wrongs of our times. Now, more than ever, we must mine the most underutilized resource available to us: *ourselves*." As has been eloquently stated elsewhere: We need a common purpose, not a common enemy. We have within ourselves the capacity to meet our own requirements.

For one who carries personal scars from having followed the dictates of the heart in one's journey, it may surprise some that I would advocate following the yearning of one's heart in the political arena. This is not about cheap sentimentality. It is more in the nature of living one's life by following one's bliss. It is taking one's life, unique and unrepeatable, and injecting it passionately into the annals of human history. It is living and loving one's vocation as also one's identity, forsaking the current practice of securing the economics of making a living separate from the art and discipline of living a life! The mind discriminates, defines and confines; the heart embraces, entices and celebrates unceasingly! Go with your heart. The *xin yi* strategy is the way of the heart, and its path is a robust throbbing of the spin and harmony of the yin-yang.

Holly Kennedy (Hilary Swank) in the movie *P.S. I Love You,* addresses her departed lover: *Dear Gerry, you said you wanted me to fall in love again, and maybe one day I will. But there are all kinds of love out there. This is my one and only life, and it's a great and terrible and short and endless thing, and none of us come out of it alive. ... Losing a mate and finding a new one to love is an awesome thing, but more awesome is the commitment of "my one and only life, ... a great and terrible and short and endless thing*."

Spirituality among the deeply secular-religious have always known that eternity is a quality of existence rather than longevity after one has become fodder for worms six feet below the ground. Love as a quality of eternity happens, is accepted, recognized and celebrated before the eulogy.

And that is what is exciting about Kilili in Washington as Obama gathers a dysfunctional government, a fractured populace and a collapsed economy into the music of the spheres: "Our world in transition, old forms torn apart, creates a new vision, demands a new heart." There will be a lot of prayers in the hearts of many on inauguration day, like this understated one from a friend who wrote: "I pray for good surprises and not too many disappointments." The first half carries the full weight of my support for Kilili. Let's GoKILILIGo!

Jaime Vergara
via e-mail

Letting the government pay for its mistakes

This is in response to the *Saipan Tribune* article that came out on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009. On page 3, titled "Court over-stepping its authority over funds," you will read Public Lands Secretary John S. DelRosario Jr.'s assessment on Presiding Judge Robert Naraja's court order to Department of Public Lands to pay the heirs of Rita Rogolifoi over $1.8 million in compensation over the government's taking of two lands in As Mahetog in 1976 and 1992.

According to the article, Mr. Del Rosario is questioning the court's authority to demand payments from DPL to compensate the injured party, in this case, the heirs of Rita Rogolifoi. He is bothered that the court has taken away the Legislature's authority to appropriate funds for land compensation. He even sympathizes with the Legislature for its failure to appropriate funds for land claims due to the dismal local and global economy.

Furthermore, he wanted everyone to know that the segregated funds of DPL is constitutionally protected, which made me wonder just how far he would go to twist everything around to make him look like the victim in this case.

I have this to say to Mr. Del Rosario: "Prim, you inherited this mess which began during the Marianas Public Land Corporation, long before MPLA and now DPL came along. This has been a very frustrating and strenuous fight for land ownership rights by the heirs of Rita Rogolifoi and you weren't even aware of it until you came on board with DPL. Now that we have come to some resolution, you want to play hardball with us. You don't even want me to step in your office to sit down and discuss possible settlement to our court case."

Mr. Del Rosario's insistence that the Legislature is the right place to appropriate funds for land claims is completely politics in nature. He wants to turn this debacle into a political gamesmanship.

DPL or the government made the mistake of taking private land for public roads and leasing portion of the land to businesses to earn revenue for its operations. Now that the injured party has won in court, Mr. Del Rosario insists that DPL should not be responsible for paying for its mistakes. This is a callous and insulting remark by an arrogant public official who thinks he is smarter than anyone else on this planet.

Why can't DPL pay for its mistake? Is DPL really constitutionally protected to cover its mistakes and from making amends to its victims? The court order by our Honorable Judge Robert Naraja is just and fair for the injured victims, the heirs of Rita Rogolifoi, and I see no intrusion on the separate powers of the other two branches of government.

Mr. Del Rosario's rationale is leading to more court battle, perhaps to the Appeal Courts, which makes me wonder why he is doing this to our family.

Whatever his motives are, I am more than ready to block the road I have been planning to do ever since Mr. Del Rosario and his lawyers are putting up a fight over our alienable land rights to our private family property in As Mahetog. If he wants to continue this fight, then I am ready to take it to the "street."

Enrique K. Seman
Administrator to heirs of Rita Rogolifoi
Kagman, Saipan

Human trafficking exaggeration?

Like most people here, we are tired of hearing about Saipan's reputation as a hub of human trafficking and the international sex trade. Like most, we sometimes see young, provocatively-dressed women walking the streets of Garapan and our gut reaction says they are lawbreakers in search of an easy and immoral dollar. But we also know that at least some, perhaps not all, but certainly some, are doing what they do because they have no choice—no other way to pay off a debt, no other way to buy a plane ticket home, no other way to buy food, no other way to avoid being physically abused. Yes, human trafficking happens here. It happens in Guam, it happens on the mainland, it happens everywhere. It stains nearly all communities, but especially those that rely heavily on laborers from poorer nations. The CNMI is such a place. But just because it happens everywhere does not mean that we should tolerate it here. Indeed, we cannot tolerate it and still call ourselves a moral and decent community.

Yes, human trafficking happens here. A typical story: a young woman comes from China following the promise of a well-paid job in a garment factory. Only upon arrival does she discover there is no job. She has lost the better part of her life savings in recruitment fees, and she probably owes someone for the cost of her plane ticket. Put yourself in her shoes. Imagine yourself in a completely foreign culture, perhaps the Middle East or central Africa. You don't speak the language, your money is all gone, and you know nobody except for those who brought you there. You are at their mercy. What decisions do you make to survive? What options do you have? If this scenario does not frighten you, imagine that it is not you, but your daughter all alone in that foreign country. Yes, this happens here.

The good news is that the CNMI has been very aggressive, and successful, in confronting this problem. We have even earned national recognition for our efforts. Most of this work has been through the CNMI's Human Trafficking Intervention Coalition, a task force made up of local and federal agencies. Thanks to the Coalition, the CNMI claims several convictions of human traffickers. It has also helped numerous victims rebuild their lives. Recently, when Guam encountered its first case of severe trafficking, a case in which several young women were literally terrorized into the sex trade, Guam came to the CNMI for help. Our Coalition is now serving as a model for Guam and other island nations as they establish their own task forces and pass their own anti-trafficking laws. This should be a source of great pride to the CNMI. Yes, human trafficking happens here, but few places are doing a better job of confronting it.

The Coalition's goal is simple: to make the CNMI a very hard place to profit from unfairly exploiting a person's status as a foreign laborer. To do this, the Coalition needs your help. We ask that you not ignore a domestic servant who you know is not allowed to leave their employer's house. We ask that you report someone who sponsors alien farmers, but then sends them back to their home country without paying them. We ask that you not assume that every young woman working the streets of Garapan is there by choice.

If a foreign laborer gets a raw deal, it does not necessarily make them a victim of human trafficking—the Coalition knows this. But some are tricked, or coerced, or forced, to do things that they really don't want to do. They are victims, and one is too many. If you wish to learn more, call the Coalition hotline at 234-5100, or if you suspect an act of human trafficking, call the Federal Bureau of Investigations at 322-6934.

CNMI Human Trafficking Intervention Coalition
via e-mail

Clarification

Your article of Jan. 7, 2009, headlined " Three ask for Tudela's support for candidacy is grossly incorrect.

Mayor Tudela does not back any of the three mentioned individuals who have told him of their interest to run for mayor in this year's elections. They are all his close friends, and he will only cast his vote for a candidate he supports at the election poll.

Additionally, Mayor Tudela still considers himself a member of the Covenant Party, and will not be disloyal to the party that puts him to his present position. I hope this will correct what he said during your reporter's interview with him.

Tony A. Benavente
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan

Business

‘Obama plan would create up to 4.1M jobs’

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama countered critics with an analysis Saturday by his economic team showing that a program of tax cuts and spending like he’s proposed would create up to 4.1 million jobs, far more than the 3 million he has insisted are needed to lift the country from recession.

Congressional Republicans reacted skeptically, just as Obama acknowledged that he would be forced to recant some of his campaign promises given the economic crisis facing the country. Even the president-elect’s own economists acknowledged their two-year estimates could be wrong.

The 14-page analysis, which was posted online, says estimates are “subject to significant margins of error”—because of the assumptions that went into the economic models and because it is not known what might pass Congress.

President-elect Barack Obama waves to onlookers as he leaves Ben’s Chili Bowl where he stopped to eat with Washington Mayor Adrian Fenty in Washington, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009.
AP

“These numbers are a stark reminder that we simply cannot continue on our current path,” Obama said in his weekly radio and YouTube broadcast address.

“If nothing is done, economists from across the spectrum tell us that this recession could linger for years and the unemployment rate could reach double digits—and they warn that our nation could lose the competitive edge that has served as a foundation for our strength and standing in the world,” he said.

Obama has provided few details of his $775 billion plan so far. This fresh report does not include the specific construction of his tax cuts, the amounts dedicated to state aid or public works.

On Saturday, economic aides and advisers declined to lay out even rough estimates for the plan’s components. They said they worked with broad instructions from Obama but didn’t want to limit negotiations with congressional leaders by outlining their limits in public.

“I want to be realistic here. Not everything that we talked about during the campaign are we going to be able to do on the pace we had hoped,” Obama told ABC’s “This Week” for an interview set to air Sunday.

For a second time since his election, Obama increased the number of jobs his jobs program would create, taking the number to as many as 4.1 million jobs saved or created—a benchmark his critics charge cannot be measured. During the campaign, he promised only 1 million new jobs.

Toyota unveiling electric concept car in Detroit

DETROIT (AP)—Toyota Motor Corp. said Saturday it is confirming plans to have an all-electric vehicle on U.S. roads by 2012 by introducing an ultra-compact battery-powered concept car at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

Toyota calls the FT-EV, based on the ultra-compact iQ model on sale in Japan, an “urban dweller” with a range of 50 miles. Although there’s no guarantee it will go into production in its current form, it illustrates the company’s product strategies.

“Last summer’s $4-a-gallon gasoline was no anomaly,” said Irv Miller, vice president of Toyota Motor Sales USA. “It was a brief glimpse of our future. We must address the inevitability of peak oil by developing vehicles powered by alternatives to liquid-oil fuel.”

The FT-EV marks Toyota’s deepest foray yet into non-gasoline vehicles and comes as a challenge to competitors like General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC, which are rushing to roll out alternatives to gasoline cars.

GM says it plans to have the highly anticipated Chevrolet Volt in showrooms by 2010. The rechargeable gas-electric car is expected to travel 40 miles on electricity alone, then a gasoline engine kicks in to extend its range.

Chrysler, meanwhile, unveiled three electric car prototypes last year - a Dodge sports car, a Jeep Wrangler and a Chrysler minivan, and said it plans to put one of the three on sale next year.

In addition to the FT-EV, Toyota said it is expanding its offering of hybrid cars by launching as many as 10 new hybrid models by early next decade in markets around the world. It also said it will start global delivery of 500 Toyota Prius plug-in hybrids powered by lithium-ion batteries later this year, instead of in 2010 as originally planned. Of those, 150 will go to U.S. lease and fleet customers.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Pennies count

By DAVID UFFINGTON
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With belts tightening everywhere, it’s more important than ever to look for ways to save money. Pennies count, and you can hold on to many of them if you surround yourself with a network of money-saving opportunities and make it a way of life.

■ Get involved in a food-supply group. Angel Food Ministries [www.angelfoodministries.com], for example, makes bulk purchases of food and has distribution points in 38 states. The cost of the food is very low. Often the program is run by local churches, but there are no qualification requirements. Once a month, orders are taken and the food delivered to a central location. If there is no distribution group near you, look into starting one.

■ Look for other low-cost food distribution groups in your area. Do an Internet search for “low cost food” and put in your town and state.

■ On FreeCycle [www.freecycle.org], you can ask for what you need and give away what you don’t need. Areas are broken down by ZIP code across the country. The generosity of many people in this group is unsurpassed. Don’t be afraid to ask for things.

■ Check the craigslist [www.craigslist.org] Free section for your area before spending money. Lots of useful items are being given away all the time.

■ Do it yourself, for everything possible. Need clothing altered, a roof repaired, oil in the car changed? Read up on it. There are manuals and how-to books for everything under the sun. If you can learn how to do a task, not only will you save yourself money, but you’ll then have a skill that’s valuable to others. Assess your skills and see what you might barter for things you need.

■ Consider adopting a philosophy of voluntary simplicity where less is more. Voluntary simplicity can put a whole new face on a tight budget. Instead of feeling pressure about what you can’t buy, in a simpler lifestyle you won’t want extras cluttering your life. The less stuff you buy, the less you have to take care of and the more money you keep in your pocket.

Bottom line: Become extremely proprietary about your cash. Take a hard look at each and every situation in which you might spend money. Make every penny count.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Citigroup, Morgan Stanley discuss brokerage combo

NEW YORK (AP)—A deal to combine the brokerages of Citigroup and Morgan Stanley—which would give Citi more cash, and Morgan Stanley more manpower—appears just days away. Morgan Stanley is likely to pay Citigroup between $2 billion and $3 billion for a 51 percent stake in the brokerage Smith Barney, a person close to the negotiations said. Morgan Stanley would then have the option to buy Smith Barney over the next three to five years, the person said. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the ongoing talks. If negotiations proceed through the weekend as they have been, an announcement could come as early as Monday, the person said.

FCC chairman: DTV delay could cause confusion

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Postponing the turnoff of analog TV broadcasts beyond the scheduled date, Feb. 17, could confuse consumers, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission warned Saturday. President-elect Barack Obama’s transition team on Thursday asked Congress to delay the shut-off. The main reason the team cited was that the Commerce Department earlier in the week ran out of money for the coupons that subsidize the cost of the converter boxes which allow older analog TVs to receive digital signals. In an interview at the International Consumer Electronics Show here, FCC chairman Kevin Martin said it’s important to make sure that the converter box subsidy program gets back on track, but that doesn’t mean delaying the analog turnoff is necessary.

3rd Satyam exec detained after fraud scandal

NEW DELHI (AP)—Indian police arrested the chief financial officer of embattled outsourcing giant Satyam Computer Services Ltd. on Saturday, the third executive to be charged in a massive fraud scandal that threatens to roil India’s flourishing tech industry. The arrest of Vadlamani Srinivas came as authorities tried to contain the $1 billion fraud scandal by dissolving the company’s board, including the interim head, and announcing plans to name 10 new replacements. The scandal broke Wednesday when Satyam’s founder and former chairman, B. Ramalinga Raju, confessed to filling the company’s balance sheets with “fictitious” assets and “nonexistent” cash in an extraordinary letter to the company’s board.

No decision on Madoff bail until Monday

NEW YORK (AP)—Bernard Madoff avoided the dismal prospect of spending the weekend in jail Friday as a judge delayed a decision on whether to revoke his bail amid allegations that the disgraced financier is trying to keep his assets away from investors burned by a $50 billion fraud. The postponement came as prosecutors and the defense agreed to extend the deadline to bring an indictment against Madoff by 30 days, according to defense lawyer Ira Sorkin. The bail decision by Magistrate Judge Ronald L. Ellis has been highly anticipated amid an outcry by the public, investors and prosecutors that Madoff be sent to jail. Investors have been especially incensed that a man accused of the largest fraud in history is allowed to spend his days and nights in his $7 million luxury Manhattan apartment. Ellis put the bail decision off until noon Monday.

Ukraine signs gas transit monitoring deal

KIEV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine on Sunday accepted a deal on the European Union-led monitoring of Russian gas transit across its territory, opening the way for restarting Russian natural gas supplies to a freezing Europe after a four-day halt in shipments. Russia wanted the written deal to renew gas shipments suspended amid a bitter contract dispute with Ukraine - a move seen by many as another attempt by Moscow to reassert its clout over Western-leaning former Soviet republics. Russia said it needs European Union monitors deployed to Ukraine to prevent it from stealing Russian gas intended for Europe. Ukraine hotly denied the claims.

Nation

Snowstorm ices roads, grounds flights in Chicago

CLEVELAND (AP)—A powerful winter storm blasted large swaths of the Midwest and Northeast with snow and freezing rain on Saturday, grounding flights and stranding vehicles along icy roads.

Nearly a foot of snow fell in some Midwest states, and more than half of the morning flights at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport were canceled or delayed. Ten inches at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport forced the cancellation of about 100 flights, Chicago's Streets and Sanitation Department reported.

"This is the biggest one of the season," said Brian Mitchell, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Cleveland. "We didn't have this kind of snow in the last couple of months."

Motorists in Youngstown and Warren, in northeast Ohio, slowed to a crawl to avoid spinouts or wrecks. Road crews were put on 12-hour shifts, and were doing all they could to keep pace with the new snow, said Theresa Pollick, a spokeswoman for the Ohio Department of Transportation.

"Now it becomes a plow and salt game," Pollick said. "It's basically keeping up with the precipitation."

Freezing rain in Indiana caused five salt trucks to slide into ditches Saturday as they worked to deice roads. Tow trucks stopped responding to accidents because they were sliding off icy roads when they tried to pull vehicles from ditches, the Star Press of Muncie reported.

"It's bad. You can't even stand up on the roads," said Duke Campbell, the highway manager for Indiana's Delaware County.

In Ohio's Sandusky Bay, a freighter heading to coal docks became trapped and had to wait for a Coast Guard cutter to clear a path through the ice.

In the Chicago suburb of Darien, a woman was killed when her vehicle spun out of control in the heavy snow, struck a dividing wall and then was hit by another vehicle. A motorist was also killed in a fiery crash on a snow- and ice-covered stretch of U.S. 20 in northern Indiana, police said.

In Michigan, at least 8 inches of snow fell on the southern Lower Peninsula by Saturday afternoon. AAA said it had responded to about 2,500 calls for road service by 4 p.m., spokeswoman Nancy Cain said. Many calls were for vehicles stuck in snowdrifts, she said.

Light snow started falling in New England Saturday night, with 4 to 8 inches forecast to fall overnight in Massachusetts and parts of Rhode Island. A wintry mix was making travel treacherous in most of northern New Jersey Saturday night.

AP

Neighbors Phil Samotus, left, and Nate Boros use their snowblowers to clear their respective driveways after a winter storm had dropped nearly eight inches of snow in Zelienople, Pa. Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009.

Bush reportedly rejected Israeli plea to raid Iran

WASHINGTON (AP)—President George W. Bush rejected a plea from Israel last year to help it raid Iran's main nuclear complex, opting instead to authorize a new U.S. covert action aimed at sabotaging Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program, The New York Times reported.

Israel's request was for specialized bunker-busting bombs that it wanted for an attack that tentatively involved flying over Iraq to reach Iran's major nuclear complex at Natanz, where the country's only known uranium enrichment plant is located, the Times reported Saturday in its online edition. The White House deflected requests for the bombs and flyover but said it would improve intelligence-sharing with Israel on covert U.S. efforts to sabotage Iran's nuclear program.

The covert efforts, which began in early 2008, involved plans to penetrate Iran's nuclear supply chain abroad and undermine electrical systems and other networks on which Iran relies, the Times said, citing interviews with current and former U.S. officials, outside experts and international nuclear inspectors who spoke on condition of anonymity. The covert program will be handed off to President-elect Barack Obama, who will deciding whether to continue it.

According to the Times, Bush decided against an overt attack based on input from top administration officials such as Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who believed that doing so would likely prove ineffective and could ignite a broader Middle East war.

Blagojevich faces tough trial in Senate

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Gov. Rod Blagojevich will face long odds, and perhaps some legal twists, in the Illinois Senate trial that will decide whether he'll keep his job or be tossed out of office.

It may be called a trial and involve the trappings of a courtroom, from a judge to exhibits and objections, but experts point out that the event will be political, not legal. The senators are free to base their decisions on old feuds and popular opinion if they want, rather than fine points of the law.

Still, some of the charges do involve fine points. Did a prescription-drug program violate pharmacy inspection laws? Did state agencies properly account for money they transferred to another state agency?

If Blagojevich loses the trial, he stands little chance of getting the verdict overturned by the courts, which shy away from tinkering with the impeachment process.

And if he testifies to defend himself, Blagojevich could find his words used against him by the federal prosecutors pursuing criminal charges against him.

"What does somebody do as an advocate for the accused? It's very, very difficult," said attorney Donald MacPherson, who represented Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham when he appealed his impeachment conviction to the state's Supreme Court.

ACROSS THE NATION

Nation's largest utility grapples with 2 spills

STEVENSON, Ala. (AP)—Standing on a porch near the Widows Creek power plant Saturday, Charlie Cookston took a drag off a cigarette and ticked off the reasons he distrusts the Tennessee Valley Authority. Dead mussels in the mighty, meandering Tennessee River. Dwindling numbers of fish. Big, black piles of coal ash that seem to get larger every day. As nearby residents await lab tests on the safety of drinking water, tempers are unsettled. Electric rates at the nation's largest utility have soared. A dike burst in Tennessee destroyed several homes, and on Friday, as much as 10,000 gallons of waste spilled into Widows Creek in northeastern Alabama. The nation's largest utility, once was viewed as a savior to the region, bringing lights, thousands of jobs and progress since its creation as a New Deal program in 1933, has had a rocky few months. "We ain't trusted TVA around here since back in the '50s," said Cookston, 59, who runs bulldozers and other heavy equipment for a living.

CDC director is leaving with a mixed legacy

ATLANTA (AP)—The woman who led the nation's top public health agency for more than six years is leaving the post with a mixed legacy. Dr. Julie Gerberding has been praised for strides against bioterrorism and maintenance of the CDC's high standing with the public, but also criticized for hewing closely to Bush administration politics and wrecking morale. No permanent replacement has been named for Gerberding, who resigned as director of the Atlanta-based U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But public health experts have been raising a number of names as they speculate about a possible successor. Gerberding's departure was revealed in a Friday night e-mail to employees of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the umbrella agency over CDC.

William Zantzinger, villain in Dylan song, dies

CHARLOTTE HALL, Md. (AP)—William Zantzinger, a wealthy Maryland landowner whose fatal beating of a black barmaid was recounted in a Bob Dylan protest song of the 1960s, was buried Friday. He was 69. Zantzinger died Jan. 3. His family did not provide further details of his death, the Brinsfield-Echols Funeral Home said. The tobacco farmer served six months and was fined $500 for manslaughter in 1963 for striking the 51-year-old barmaid with his cane for taking too long to serve him a drink. Hattie Carroll later died of a stroke. In the "Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," Dylan criticized different standards of justice meted out to whites and blacks. Zantzinger was allowed to delay the start the sentence two weeks so he could harvest his tobacco crop and served the time in the Washington County jail, working in its kitchen.

Budget woes prompt states to rethink prison policy

NEW YORK (AP)—Their budgets in crisis, governors, legislators and prison officials across the nation are making or considering policy changes that will likely remove tens of thousands of offenders from prisons and parole supervision. Collectively, the pending and proposed initiatives could add up to one of biggest shifts ever in corrections policy, putting into place cost-saving reforms that have struggled to win political support in the tough-on-crime climate of recent decades. "Prior to this fiscal crisis, legislators could tinker around the edges - but we're now well past the tinkering stage," said Marc Mauer, executive director of the Sentencing Project, which advocates alternatives to incarceration. "Many political leaders who weren't comfortable enough, politically, to do it before can now - under the guise of fiscal responsibility - implement programs and policies that would be win/win situations, saving money and improving corrections," Mauer said

Asia

Mercury in gold mining: a toxic threat

KERENGPANGI, Indonesia (AP)—A gold miner stands waist-deep in a polluted pond, dumps a capful of mercury into a bucket of ore and mixes it in with his bare hands.

The darting liquid metal wraps itself around the gold to form a silver pellet the size of a marble.

The use of mercury in gold mining is illegal in Indonesia because it is toxic to both human health and the environment. But the price of gold has tripled since 2001, and mercury is the easiest way to extract it.

"Of course I'm worried," said miner Handoko, 23, a grim man in a baseball hat who goes by one name. "But this is the job."

Tens of thousands of remote mining sites have sprung up mostly in Asia, Latin America and Africa, using as much as 1,000 tons of mercury each year. The mercury ravages the nervous system of miners and their families. It also travels thousands of miles in the atmosphere, settling in oceans and river beds in Europe and North America and moving up the food chain into fish.

Small-scale gold mining is the second-worst source of mercury pollution in the world, after the burning of fossil fuels. And Indonesia ranks behind only China in the use of mercury in gold mining.

Mercury's impact is evident in mining regions like Central Kalimantan, on the island of Borneo. Acres of tropical forest are now virtual desert. Villagers say fish populations have dropped by 70 percent. The Galangan gold mining site stretches several miles, stripped of trees and dotted with mercury-laced ponds.

"This area is finished," said Fauzi Achmad, a gold shop owner, as he drove past the moonscape-like dunes and abandoned mine sites.

Despite the hazards, buying mercury at gold mining sites is as easy as purchasing toothpaste. The international trade in mercury is largely unregulated. And most of the 55 countries where small-scale gold mining is rife lack the political will or capacity to prevent the toxic metal from falling into the hands of 10 to 15 million poor miners.

"The continued use of mercury in gold mining threatens millions of people all over the world, since mercury is a global air pollutant," said Michael Bender, a coordinator for the Zero Mercury Working Group, a coalition of 40 groups worldwide that campaigns to reduce mercury use. "We're talking about a neurotoxin that science clearly shows threatens pregnant women, their fetus and those who eat large amounts of fish."

Traditional gold miners work at a mine in Hampalit, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, Thursday, April 24, 2008.

AP

China to mark defeat of Tibet uprising

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese-backed Tibetan leaders will soon set a date for what they call "Serf Liberation Day" to mark the defeat 50 years ago of a pro-independence uprising in the Himalayan region, state media reported Sunday.

A holiday to mark the "emancipation of millions of serfs and slaves" in Tibet will be decided on during a meeting of the region's legislature starting Wednesday, Xinhua News Agency said.

The entry of Chinese forces into Tibet in 1949 was followed by efforts to transform the Buddhist, feudal order into a socialist, secular society. Tibetans rebelled on March 10, 1959, to try an oust the Chinese, but the uprising ended after 20 days with the flight of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, into exile in India.

A bill to decide on a holiday marking those events will be presented during the second annual session of the ninth Tibet Regional People's Congress, Xinhua said.

The bill is aimed at "reminding all the Chinese people, including Tibetans, of the landmark democratic reform initiated 50 years ago," Pang Boyong, deputy secretary general of the Tibetan regional congress standing committee, said Saturday, according to the report.

"Since then, millions of slaves under the feudal serfdom became masters of their own," Pang said.

Calls to the Tibet regional people's congress rang unanswered and two Tibetan government officials contacted by phone Sunday in Lhasa said they were unaware of the news.

Critics of Chinese rule in Tibet note the region remains one of China's poorest and say most of the benefits of economic development have gone to members of the Han Chinese majority, rather than to Tibetans.

They accuse the government of enforcing policies intended to destroy the indigenous culture and language and of persecuting Tibetan Buddhists loyal to the Dalai Lama.

In the report, Pang also criticized the Dalai Lama and his supporters for "sabotaging" the Communist Party's system of regional autonomy in Tibet.

"They are against the will of the Tibetan people and running against the historical trend of progress in this region," he was quoted as saying.

Beijing demonizes the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and claims he seeks to destroy China's sovereignty by pushing for independence for Tibet. The Dalai Lama says he wants "real autonomy" for Tibet, not independence.

China claims Tibet has always been part of its territory, while many Tibetans assert their land was virtually independent for centuries.

Deadly riots in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, on March 14 last year sparked the biggest anti-government protests among Tibetans in decades—and a major military crackdown.

World

Israel tells Gazans to brace for stepping up of offensive

AP

Palestinians walk in front of a building destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, Saturday, Jan.10, 2009.

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israel dropped bombs and leaflets on Gaza on Saturday, pounding suspected rocket sites and tunnels used by Hamas militants and warning of a wider offensive despite frantic diplomacy to end the bloodshed.

Egypt hosted talks aimed at defusing the crisis, but war had the momentum on a bloody day on which more than 30 Palestinians, many of them noncombatants, were killed, according to Gaza medics. Hamas fighters launched 15 rockets at southern Israel, injuring three Israelis in the city of Ashkelon, the Israeli military said.

At hospitals, distraught relatives - men in jeans and jackets and women in black Islamic robes - sobbed and shrieked at the loss of family. Flames and smoke rose over Gaza City amid heavy fighting.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas predicted a "waterfall of blood" unless all parties adhere to a United Nations call for a cease-fire. But Israel has said the Security Council resolution passed Thursday was unworkable and Hamas, the Islamic group whose government controls Gaza but is not recognized internationally, was angry that it was not consulted.

Damascus-based Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal made a fiery speech on Arab news channel Al-Jazeera, describing the Israeli assault as a "holocaust." Still, Hamas teams were in Cairo to discuss a cease-fire proposed by Egypt.

At least 814 Palestinians, roughly half of them civilians, have died since war broke out on Dec. 27, according to Palestinian medical officials. Thirteen Israelis, including 10 soldiers, have been killed.

Thousands worldwide protest Gaza violence

BERLIN (AP)—Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in cities across Europe and in Lebanon Saturday, shouting protests against the Israeli offensive in Gaza.

Protesters burned Israeli flags in Sweden and threw shoes at the U.S. consulate in Edinburgh, Scotland. In central London, three officers were hurt when demonstrators hurled shoes and placards at police outside the Israeli Embassy. One officer was knocked unconscious. Some 180 people were arrested in Paris.

But in Innsbruck, Austria, volunteer security personnel arranged by the Islamic organizers of a demonstration moved quickly to surround and protect an elderly man after he suddenly unrolled an Israeli flag in the middle of the protest.

Israel says its two-week-old offensive is intended to stop Palestinian Hamas rocket attacks on southern Israel. Palestinian medical officials say more than 800 people have been killed.

A crowd of 12,000 gathered in London's Hyde Park carrying placards marked "Gaza: Stop the massacre" and chanting "free, free Palestine."

Police said 15 people were arrested after a group of around 2,000 demonstrators clashed with police guarding the Israeli embassy. Two were detained on suspicion of assaulting police officers.

Scores of marches were held across France, the biggest of them in the capital, where police estimated 30,000 people took part. Paris police scuffled with a small group toward the end. Police said they made 180 arrests and a dozen police officers were injured.

Police estimated that 30,000 people protested in the northern Spanish city of Barcelona, some carrying bloodstained blankets and mock dead bodies of children.

5 Somali pirates drown with ransom share

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Five of the pirates who hijacked a Saudi supertanker drowned with their share of a $3 million ransom, a relative said Saturday, the day after the bundle of cash was apparently dropped by parachute onto the deck of the ship.

The Sirius Star and its 25 crew sailed safely away Friday at the end of a two-month standoff in the Gulf of Aden, where pirates attacked over 100 ships last year. Hundreds more kidnapped sailors remain in the hands of pirates.

The drowned pirates' boat overturned in rough seas, and family members were still looking for four missing bodies, said Daud Nure, another pirate who knew the men involved.

Piracy is one of the few ways to make money in Somalia. Half the population is dependent on aid and a whole generation has grown up knowing nothing but war. A recent report by London's Chatham House think-tank said pirates raked in more than $30 million in ransoms last year.

Somalia's lawless coastline borders one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. Attacks have continued despite the patrols by warships from France, Germany, Britain, America, India and China.

Health & Fitness

Turn the world into your gym

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Is it easy to get a decent workout these days?

Absolutely. Just take your workout to the streets—or the beach or the hiking trail.

Hiking trails, with their hills and uneven terrain, are perfect places to practice interval training and improve cardiovascular endurance, as well as strengthen core and leg muscles.

Miles of beach are a fitness boon. Muscles must work harder when feet dig into sand, ramping up the difficulty of even the easiest workouts.

And the concrete and steel structures in the city provide the perfect way to challenge all major muscle groups while partaking of parkour, a relatively new discipline in which people use only the body to navigate the environment by scaling walls, vaulting ledges and jumping up stairs.

In these features, some exercises may seem familiar—but doing them on an incline or an uneven or shifting surface adds an exhilarating element.

In some cases, we offer sets and repetitions for each exercise—but they're only suggestions. Too easy? Increase the intensity of the exercise and add a few more reps. Too challenging? Knock down the energy and do a few less. And always work at a comfortable pace.

Hit the trail for a fitness challenge

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Hiking trails are good for more than a challenging outdoor walk. The uneven terrain forces the body to use more stabilizing muscles in the abdominals and back, which improves balance and strengthens the core. Sprints or walking fast uphill puts you into an anaerobic zone, which taxes the muscles and benefits the cardiovascular system.

Here, Keli Roberts, trainer and former IDEA Health & Fitness Association international instructor of the year, demonstrates exercises that are suited to any basic hiking trail. Although beginners can tackle these moves, it's important to pay attention to the modifications and make sure the terrain isn't excessively rocky or craggy, because it's easy to slip on loose rocks and dirt. Always keep an eye on the ground while moving. And stay focused on the task at hand. Take in the view on a break, not during an exercise that requires concentration.

First, warm up: Walk briskly, run or run-walk for 15 minutes, increasing speed as you go.

Then try:

■ Hill Skip Repeats

The hill skip is an exaggerated skipping movement in which the knee and opposite arm drive up as high as possible during the jumping portion. Go for height, not distance, Roberts says. Done on an incline, the skip is a plyometric (high-intensity, explosive motion) and anaerobic move that develops strength and speed. It also targets the calves, glutes, hamstrings and quads, and some shoulder and latissimus dorsi (lat) muscles. Core muscles also are affected, as the body strives for balance.

"This helps develop the ability to lift yourself up," Roberts says. "It makes running or playing soccer or going up a flight of stairs much easier. It's like putting steroids in your hike."

How many: Five to 10 repetitions, with about a minute-long walk down the hill inbetween to recover.

■ Uphill Walking Lunges

Take walking lunges out of the gym and put them on a hill and suddenly this already challenging exercise becomes super-tough. "It's a complete exercise for the lower body" that targets hamstrings, quads, glutes and inner thighs, Roberts says. It conditions the ankles and feet when the body tries to right itself on an uneven surface.

In the lunge position, keep knees at a 90-degree angle, and don't rush the movement -- take a second or two to stabilize the body before pushing off. Pumping the arms helps engage more core muscles.

How many: One to three sets of 20 paces each with a one- to two-minute rest between sets.

■ Hill Sprints

Repeated sprints uphill followed by rest periods improve cardio function and work the leg muscles. Choose a navigable path about 50 meters (164 feet) long from the flat to the crest of the hill. Go for maximum speed, pumping the arms as you go. Walk down the hill to recover completely -- about two minutes -- before sprinting again. Once you feel yourself flagging during the run, stop. This is about quality, Roberts says, not quantity.

How many: Varies depending on ability, but no more than 10.

■ Incline Push-Ups

These are easier than regular push-ups but still provide good upper-body conditioning. Find a sloping wall or embankment and place both hands on the wall at shoulder height. Lower your chest toward your hands, keeping elbows out and the body in alignment from head to toe -- don't push hips out, or stomach in. This move works triceps, upper back, shoulder and chest muscles, and abdominals. Lifting one leg during the movement destabilizes the body, engaging more of the core.

How many: Two sets of eight to 15 reps. (Try alternating with sets of walking lunges.)

■ Double-Leg Stretch

This core-strengthening move borrows from Pilates and can be done on top of a picnic table, flat bench or flat rock. Begin by lying face up, arms and legs tucked in toward the torso. Extend arms and legs out at the same time, keeping them off the table -- the lower they are, the tougher this exercise becomes. Exhale on the extension, then inhale as the arms and legs are brought in. The head and neck are lifted but not strained -- beginners can keep their head on the table. The trunk is held still during the movement, and all core muscles in the abdomen and back are engaged.

How many: One to two sets of 10 to 15 reps.

■ Interval Runs, or Fartleks

Don't giggle. Fartlek is Swedish for "speed play" and refers to alternating short periods of high- and low-intensity aerobic conditioning -- without a break -- to improve the cardiovascular system. Roberts recommends switching between one minute of fast running followed by one minute of slow running or even walking (beginners can alternate between fast and slow bouts of walking). "This is a great drill that makes you a much faster runner," she says. On the downhills, Roberts suggests trying to keep the same pace, going with gravity.

How much: Run or walk as long as possible, cutting back on the overall time if adding in other exercises on the trail.

■ Uphill Lateral Traveling Squats

Up the ante on this popular exercise by traveling sideways on a hill. This engages major leg muscles, including inner and outer thigh muscles and glutes.

Keep knees at 90 degrees in the squat position, feet shoulder-width apart, and hold hands in front. Work your way upward, using the top leg to pull you up the hill rather than pushing off from the bottom leg. As with lunges, take time to steady the body while in the squat. Walk down the hill to recover, then repeat.

How many: Two sets of 20 paces.

■ Star Balance

This exercise may look simple, but core strength and balance are required to pull it off. Find a gently sloping tree trunk or wall on which to place one hand, then (keeping the arm straight) lift the outside leg without bringing up the hip. Raise the other arm up into a star position while leaning into the tree. Beginners should lift the arm and leg only as high as possible while keeping the body balanced. This drill engages oblique (side) muscles of the trunk as well as glutes, and improves balance.

How many: Hold one side 40 to 60 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

■ Step-Ups

This exercise can be done on a bench, a firm embankment or a large, flat rock. When one foot is placed on the bench, the knee should be at a 90-degree angle.

Step up on the bench with the right leg and bend the left leg, pointing the knee forward, so the left foot is touching the right knee. This works the glutes, hamstrings and quadriceps, and uses the inner and outer thigh muscles for stability. "Doing these makes everything you do easier -- climbing hills, walking up stairs," Roberts says. Rests between sets are allowed, but plowing through keeps the heart rate up and works the cardiovascular system harder.

How many: Two to three sets of 12 to 15 reps on each leg.

From top to bottom: STONE MOVES: For a simpler twist on the regular push-up, find a sloping wall to push from, working the triceps, abdominals and various other muscles. Sprints uphill followed by short rest periods boost leg muscles and cardio function. Engage your abdomen and back with double-leg stretches that work core muscles. THE PARK: Using a tree as support, Keli Roberts works her core muscles with a "star balance" on a trail in Pasadena, Calif.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

For an added burn, try exercising on the sand

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Most people associate the beach with swimming or surfing, but the water isn't the only exercise-friendly element. Some beach areas feature bars, rings, swings and balance beams—free equipment that can make a workout engaging and fun. Plus, the sand offers a shifting surface that forces the stabilizing muscles of the core to fire. Feet sink in, making muscles work harder and creating a bigger calorie burn.

Jennifer Cohen (www.jennifercohen.com), fitness trainer and author of "No Gym Required," demonstrates here. Pails act as weights when filled with wet or dry sand, adding an extra challenge. These exercises are also easily done at a park or a playground with similar equipment.

■ Ab crunches and pelvic tilt on a swing

Lie on the sand on your back with your feet in a swing seat, legs extended and hands behind your head. Contract the abdominal muscles, bringing the knees and the shoulders together without straining the neck. Release and repeat. This targets core muscles. For the pelvic tilt, place back and head on the sand, and feet on the swing seat with knees straight. Push the pelvis up and release, squeezing the glutes.

How many: Repeat both exercises

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about 15 times.

■ Decline push-ups on a balance beam

Push-ups on a decline (where hands are lower than feet) have an added degree of difficulty, since the body is working harder against gravity. Place hands in the sand and toes on top of a low balance beam (or, to make it a little easier, place them against the side of the beam) and, with hands shoulder-width apart, lower the chest to the ground as far as possible while keeping the body straight. This works the entire upper body and engages the core, which has to work even harder to stay stable since hands are on an uneven surface and digging into the sand.

To add even more difficulty, bring one knee toward the chest during the push-up, alternating legs. You can also switch between bent-leg and straight-leg push-ups. Not that much upper body strength? Switch things around and do an incline push-up, with hands on the beam, toes in the sand.

How many: Three sets of 10 to 12 reps.

■ Triceps dip on a balance beam

In the basic triceps-dip move, hands are placed on the beam, fingers forward. Knees are bent at a 90-degree angle and the body is lowered until the elbows also come to 90 degrees. Make sure your shoulders are relaxed and not hunched. "You can plateau on this very quickly," Cohen says, "so you always need to increase the resistance." To do that, straighten the legs and dig your heels into the sand, then lower elbows to 90 degrees. Or start with knees at 90 degrees again, but cross one leg over the other, then switch legs. For a really tough version that targets core muscles as well as the triceps, extend one leg and the opposite arm.

How many: Three sets of 8 to 10 reps.

■ Speed skating

Mimicking speed-skating moves works the legs and cardiovascular system. As with actual skating, outer thigh muscles get a workout, as do the torso and the arms. Stabilizing trunk muscles are engaged as well.

Starting in a standing position, move the right leg back and to the left side while leaning forward and touching the toe of the left foot with the right hand. Switch and repeat, keeping the body low to the ground. Doing this while lifting a weighted sand pail with the outstretched arm increases the difficulty; switch the pail from hand to hand while switching feet.

How many: Start with 30 seconds, then gradually increase the amount of time.

■ Crab walk

With chest facing up, place hands and feet in the sand. Walk backward or forward on all fours in a straight line at a comfortable pace, pushing off the heels, for about 20 to 30 feet, making sure not to drop the torso. The sand is the key element here, as it provides a significant resistance. This will work the triceps, hamstrings, quads, calves, glutes and core.

How many: Complete two lengths, moving forward or backward.

■ Plyometric jumps

Top to bottom: A CORE WORKOUT: Jennifer Cohen does a bent-leg decline push-up on a balance beam. Too difficult? Try them on the incline, with your hands on the beam, your toes in the sand. GOING UP: Cohen does a pull-up on rings at Santa Monica beach. SAND WORKOUT: Jennifer Cohen does "speed-skating" drills in Santa Monica. Southern California's beaches provide an inexpensive spot for toning up. A bonus: Exercising on sand pushes muscles harder, ramping up even the easiest workout.
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Draw a 10- to 15-foot line in the sand, or stretch out a jump rope. Starting on one end, bend the knees and jump across the line, zigzagging back and forth. "Since your feet are planted in the sand," Cohen says, "it's harder to get power and height." Make sure to land in a squat position before jumping again to protect the knees and other joints. Explosive moves like these are great for sports such as basketball and volleyball but should be done only when the body is fully warmed up.

How many: Beginners should do about 10 to 15 jumps; more advanced exercisers can do two sets.

■ Pull-ups on rings

Find rings that are low enough to be reached without straining or jumping—they should be about shoulder height or a little higher. Grab the rings with both hands, keeping the rings parallel, and gradually lower your body, legs straight, feet in the sand and slightly apart (the wider apart the feet are, the easier the exercise). Pull yourself up toward the rings, keeping the body straight, then go back down. This works shoulder, back, triceps and chest muscles. Doing this exercise with the rings turned 45 degrees also works the biceps.

How many: Three sets of 12 to 15 reps.

■ Inverted ab crunches on a bar

This move targets all the muscles of the abs, but it's an advanced exercise and should be done with a spotter. Find a bar low enough to swing your legs over, and carefully climb up so that your knees are folded over and you're hanging upside down. Gently lower your head and torso toward the ground, stretching the arms past the head. Contracting the abdominals, slowly move your torso up toward the bar, touch it with your hands, then slowly go back down, letting arms go past your head again. Note that hanging upside down may cause headaches or dizziness, so always proceed with caution.

How many: One set of 5 to 8 reps.

■ Beach drills

This multi-part exercise incorporates cardio and full-body conditioning. Begin with feet hip-width apart and do small running steps in the sand for about 30 seconds. Drop to a squat, then, with hands in the sand, kick the legs out to a push-up position. From here, there are several options: Jump back into a squat position, stand up and repeat; do a push-up, squat, stand and repeat; or segue from the push-up position to side planks, return to push-up position, squat, stand and repeat. The more that's added on, the more difficult this exercise becomes.

How many: 10.

A concrete plan for urban fitness

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—In the noncompetitive discipline known as parkour, you move through the environment as efficiently as possible, using only the human body. Parkour, which originated in France and is becoming increasingly popular in the U.S., incorporates vaulting, jumping, skipping, climbing, running, hanging, swinging and other moves as participants proceed from one place to another. Enthusiasts are drawn to the broad navigational possibilities and challenges, with no rules and no set techniques.

Parkour requires a certain level of athleticism, and the more athletic one is, the easier (and more fun) it is to traverse the terrain, be it concrete or earth. Anyone starting from scratch might want to begin more traditional strength and cardio training before tackling parkour moves or while learning them. Upper-body strength is especially important for climbing walls and vaulting, while leg strength is paramount for jumps. Strong joints make for better landings, and good cardio function is necessary for moves that require endurance. Core strength is key because it's integral to almost every move. Balance and core strength are required for safe landings.

Parkour itself is excellent for training pretty much all the muscles of the body as well as building bone density.

The exercises here are courtesy of Cliff Kravit, a parkour instructor (www.lagymnastics.com/index.php) and founder of PKCali (www.pkcali.com/news.php), an online resource for parkour in Southern California.

Safety is vital, and progression is key—you build on basic moves until proficiency is attained. Focus on the exercise before, during and after completing it; losing concentration can mean tripping, slipping or falling. Beginners should practice on flat ground whenever possible, gradually increasing the difficulty, and use a spotter when necessary.

■ Cat vault, saut de chat, or Kong vault

This basic move entails leaping over a waist-high obstacle that has some depth to it and has a flat top—a low wall, say. It's a quadrupedal movement (involving arms and legs), so both upper and lower body muscles are engaged.

To start, take a few running steps toward the obstacle, place both hands on the far end, tuck the legs and bring them through, using the momentum to jump over the wall. "You want to keep moving forward, and continue the momentum and fluidity," Kravit says, so keep running a bit after landing. To make this move easier, jump and stop on the top of the wall, knees bent, then jump down. Doing this a few times will work the cardiovascular system.

■ Step-up

This move is good preparation for climbing walls, which often requires a burst of speed and power to propel the body vertically. Step up on a flat, elevated surface, about one to 1 1/2 feet high, with the ball of the foot, then drive the body upward, hands reaching above the head, before landing on the ground, knees bent to absorb the impact. Beginners can try this without the jump. Repeat, then switch legs.

From top to bottom: STAIRS, ON ALL FOURS: A forward-motion cat jump lands Cliff Kravit on his hands a moment before his feet land behind him. A certain amount of athleticism helps. START LOW: The step-up movement is a prelude to more ambitious wall-climbing. LEDGE WORK: Kravit prowls the UCLA campus to demonstrate the cat balance. THE URBAN JUNGLE: Kravit shimmies up a wall – an example of parkour. In the fairly new discipline, people use only their body to navigate the environment, challenging all major muscle groups.
LOS ANGELES TIMES

■ Box jump

Find a flat, wide surface on which you can jump comfortably, even if it's only six inches off the ground, like a low curb or stair. Bend the knees and jump up, landing on both feet, then immediately jump down and repeat. "It should be a quick re-bound," says Kravit. If going up and down that quickly is too difficult, try adding an extra hop while on the ground; this also will help stabilize the body. Leg and core muscles are engaged, and this exercise also trains fast-twitch muscle fibers, which are needed for quick bursts of speed or strength, and are important in jumps, a cornerstone of parkour.

■ Sideways quadrupedal stair exercise

Facing sideways on a flight of stairs, place hands on two consecutive steps and propel the legs upward, using the upper body, and lifting the feet up a couple of steps higher than the hands. This move targets upper-body muscles—especially the lats—and the core. Going down will be easier, but use the same method: Place the hands first, then propel the legs downward using the upper body to control the movement.

■ Cat balance

This is another quadrupedal movement that mimics the way a cat walks, and gives a full-body workout. On a low ledge or the ground (try to find a seam in the sidewalk), crouch on hands and feet, making sure the hips aren't elevated too high and the knees aren't touching the ground. Move backward and forward in a line, placing weight on arms and legs, keeping the head and neck aligned and always looking just ahead of the hands, which will help maintain balance.

"This gets you used to being horizontal and low to the ground," Kravit says. "It's about developing that center of balance, and (it) gets you used to moving the arms and legs in conjunction with one another."

■ Wall shimmy

Strong arm and back muscles are needed for this exercise. Find a wall from which you can hang without touching the ground. Grasp the top of the wall with both hands, and place the balls of the feet against the wall, bending the knees. Shift your body sideways along the wall, moving one hand and foot at the same time, then the other hand and foot. Mastering this move will make wall climbs easier, as it gets the body strong and stable for more advanced work.

■ Cat jump or Kong vault up stairs

This variation on the basic Kong vault uses stairs and is another quadrupedal movement. Starting in a crouch, push off with the legs, land the jump on the hands a few stairs up and then bring the feet up to a stair lower than the hands. Use the upper body to absorb some of the impact of the jump to spare the knees. Continue up the stairs, but walk down—do not do this exercise down the stairs.

■ Precision jump

Choose two points with some distance between them; beginners can practice on flat ground; those who are more advanced can choose a more elevated spot, such as a low curb or wall. Choose a spot on which to land, and starting in a squat position, jump and try to land on that exact spot, never taking your eyes off the mark. Use the arms to propel the body upward and strive for a full-body extension if making a long jump. Land on the balls of the feet with knees bent to absorb impact. Take a moment to find your center of balance before jumping again. This exercise works the legs and trains core muscles.

Life & Style

Party like it's not 2008: Golden Globes return

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—After Hollywood labor strife shut down last year's Golden Globes, organizers promised their show would be back, bigger and better than ever.

Fans will find out Sunday as the 66th annual Globes, the town's second-biggest movie celebration after the Academy Awards, return in their somewhat boozy glory.

A looser, more relaxed affair than the Oscars, the Globes are a televised dinner party where Hollywood's elite share a meal and drinks, sometimes cutting loose with unexpected antics (this is the place Jack Nicholson once mooned the crowd for a laugh).

The show could be punctuated with a solemn moment, though. Nearly a year after his death, Heath Ledger might be honored as best supporting actor for his frenzied performance as the Joker in the Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight."

Other acting nominees include Angelina Jolie for "Changeling" and romantic partner Brad Pitt for "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"; "Titanic" co-stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet for their reunion film, "Revolutionary Road"; Tom Cruise and Robert Downey Jr. for "Tropic Thunder"; and Anne Hathaway for "Rachel Getting Married."

Winslet also has a nomination for "The Reader," while Meryl Streep is competing for two awards, dramatic actress with "Doubt" and musical or comedy actress with "Mamma Mia!"

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," "Doubt" and "Frost/Nixon" lead the field with five nominations each.

AP

The six presenters of the 65th annual Golden Globe awards sit onstage at the start of the show at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., in this Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008 file photo. From left, are Lara Spencer of Insider; Brooke Anderson Showbiz Tonight, CNN; Jim Moret, Inside Edition; Giuliana Rancic, E! News Daily; Dayna Devon, Extra; and Mary Hart, Entertainment Tonight.

Last year's Globe show was scrapped after stars said they would stay away in honor of picket lines by the Writers Guild of America, which was engaged in a bitter strike against producers. In its place was a briskly paced news conference where winners were announced from a podium.

One of 2008's scheduled honorees finally will get his prize. Globe organizers had intended to present Steven Spielberg with the Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement, but the strike delayed it a year.

The Globes serve as a barometer for potential Oscar contenders, often singling out deserving newcomers who might have been overlooked among bigger-name stars. Relative unknown Hilary Swank won for dramatic actress at the Globes for 1999's "Boys Don't Cry," then went on to an upset win at the Oscars over Annette Bening, who had been considered the front-runner for "American Beauty."

Sunday's winners could get a last-minute boost for the Oscars, whose balloting closes the following day. Oscar nominations come out Jan. 22, with the awards following on Feb. 22.

The Globes are presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a group of about 90 reporters covering show business for overseas outlets. The show airs live on NBC.

Formals, face lifts, free stuff: It's Globes time

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Stars are sprucing themselves up, getting gifts and going to galas before Sunday's Golden Globes.

PRE-GLOBES GALA

Even celebs who may not be Golden Globes-bound will don glamorous duds this weekend. A spate of stars, including Tobey Maguire, Demi Moore, Jake Gyllenhaal and Sting, were expected Saturday at the Art of Elysium's annual charity gala.

The swanky soiree, held at a former cathedral in downtown Los Angeles, will include dinner, music, a fashion show and special honors for Eva Mendes and Jim Sheridan.

Mendes was chosen to receive the inaugural Spirit of Elysium award for her work with the organization over the past two years. Sheridan, the event's co-chair, was to be presented with the Visonary Award before passing the torch to next year's honoree, Shepard Fairey.

Founded in 1997, the Art of Elysium encourages actors, artists and musicians to share their time and talent at artistic workshops for seriously ill children. Last year's gala raised over $800,000.

GIFTS GALORE

Nothing gets stars in the mood for a big awards show like piles of swag. And despite the slumping economy, the getting was good at gift suites around town.

Stars who visited the DPA gifting lounge at Beverly Hills' Peninsula Hotel—including Golden Globe nominees Blair Underwood and Melissa George—could collect Jil Sander sunglasses, a six-day Tahitian getaway, fine jewelry, handbags and designer dog collars. They could also get pampered with treatments such as eyelash extensions, facials, massages and foot reflexology.

Down the street at Kari Feinstein's Style Suite in West Hollywood, guests perused three floors packed with goodies to eat, drink, wear or apply to skin and hair.

Wendi's Fine English Toffee and Nothing Bundt Cakes provided a sugar kick, and Little Black Dress wines and Glowelle antioxidant beauty drinks offered liquid refreshment while guests including Jessica Alba, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges and Golden Globe nominee Debra Messing stocked up on swag.

Messing collected tooth-whitening products, bedazzled shearling boots and a box of Glowelle drinks, which she called "Glow-tox." Alba fell in love with a woven, diamond-studded bracelet from Tacori. Michelle Trachtenberg of the hit TV teen drama "Gossip Girl" snapped up sexy underthings from Bittersweet Butterfly and Golden Globe nominee Viola Davis coveted a lavender leather handbag from Moni Moni.

Other stars ogled conflict-free, earth-friendly fine jewelry from Precious Earth, adult-size footie pajamas from Pajama City and sparkling gems from Touchstone Crystal.

Davis, who's enjoying widespread accolades for her work in "Doubt," said awards season was "dizzying" but not stressful.

"It's just been a joy," she said. "It's a joy to be recognized for your work."

GOLDEN FACELIFT

At least one glittering star will admit having a face lift: the Golden Globe statuette.

The film-swathed globe atop a marble base has been revamped this year. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association spent two years refining its trademark trophy. The new one—featuring a more detailed, accurate globe and a new marble base—will be handed out for the first time at Sunday's ceremony.

"There's really not much change in the design," said Jorge Camara, the association's president. "It's basically the same globe with a strip of film around it—the one that we have had since we started."

The organization also redesigned its Cecil B. DeMille award, presented annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to the entertainment industry. This year's honoree, Steven Spielberg, will be the first recipient of the redesigned award.

The revamped statuettes also come with a new leather-bound, velvet-lined case, Camara said, adding that previous Golden Globe winners are welcome to upgrade to the new statue: "We will be very happy to replace them if they want to."

5 foreign-language Globe contenders meet, greet fans

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The five directors nominated in the foreign-language category for the Golden Globes gathered Saturday to bask in the adulation of fans and talk film.

The symposium marked the first time the directors—four Europeans and an Israeli—were gathered in the same place, the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.

Hollywood Foreign Press Association Vice President Mike Goodrich, who acted as a moderator, said the fan-flocked event intends to generate dialogue among filmmakers. The press association will host the 66th annual Golden Globe ceremony on Sunday.

Ari Folman, director of the Israeli animated war drama "Waltz with Bashir," arrived fresh from a win at Thursday's Critics' Choice awards.

"Basically, it's like arriving into a different planet," Folman said of Los Angeles, where he's been for a week. "And everything here has nothing to do with my everyday life, I can tell you that for sure."

Italy's Matteo Garrone received a Hollywood endorsement when director Martin Scorsese championed his docudrama "Gomorrah." Also a critical sensation at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival, Garrone hopes all the attention will help the movie succeed when it releases stateside in February.

"The nomination for the movie, it's a great honor for me, and for all the people that worked on this project, this movie," Garrone said.

Swedish director Jan Troell is vying for his second Globe—decades after his 1971 win—as a nominee for his Swedish-Danish historical drama "Everlasting Moments."

Troell noted that he's actually distantly related to the makers of the other Swedish presence at this year's Globes. His wife's cousin is Bjorn Ulvaeus of ABBA, the Swedish pop group whose music is the soundtrack for best musical or comedy picture nominee "Mamma Mia!"

First-time director Philippe Claudel, nominee for the French drama "I've Loved You So Long," was giddy, literally giggling, when asked about his Golden Globes experience.

Less anxious was Uli Edel, who directed German entry "The Baader-Meinhof Complex."

"First of all, you just need a tuxedo," said Edel. "I have to get a tuxedo and go to the Golden Globes. So, it's very simple."

Attorney: 'Idol' star's NC home won't be auctioned

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—n attorney for a lending company says the auction of a million-dollar home belonging to "American Idol" winner Fantasia Barrino won't happen because an agreement has been reached.

Charlotte-based attorney Larry Goldman said Saturday in an e-mail to The Associated Press the two sides have worked out the matter. He did not immediately respond to a request for more details.

Goldman represents the Florida company that was trying to get the 2004 "American Idol" winner to repay money it loaned her in 2006 for tax payments on one of her homes in Charlotte, N.C.

If the agreement hadn't been reached, the $1.1 million home would have been sold Monday by the Mecklenberg County Sheriff's Office.

Swayze checks into hospital with pneumonia

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Patrick Swayze has checked himself into the hospital for observation after contracting pneumonia, A&E President Abbe Raven announced Friday at a meeting of the Television Critics Association. Swayze was scheduled to appear to discuss his upcoming drama "The Beast."

Robert DeBitetto, A&E's programming senior vice president, explained his absence.

"Patrick has asked that I tell you that this morning he checked himself into the hospital for observation," said DeBitetto. "Chemotherapy can take its toll on the immune system, and illnesses are a part of that. Patrick wishes me to tell you that he's very sorry he cannot attend, but plans to get back to promoting `The Beast' soon."

Swayze

Swayze's spokeswoman, Annett Wolf, confirmed that Swayze was in the hospital but would not provide additional details.

"In light of the news today, it's a bump in the road," said Vincent Angell, one of the show's co-executive producers. "We wish him all the best."

In the series, which premieres Jan. 15, Swayze plays an FBI veteran who trains a rookie partner played by Travis Fimmel. Producers said they found out Swayze had cancer four hours after learning A&E had picked up the series. They also said filming was completed on all episodes of the first season and hope Swayze could continue in the role for a second season.

"He's an inspiration," said Fimmel. "He makes the little things seem so not important."

Earlier this week, Swayze told ABC's Barbara Walters that his yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer put him "through hell" while he pushed ahead on his new TV series.

The 56-year-old actor also owned up to his fear: "Yeah, I'm scared. Yeah, I'm angry. Yeah, I'm (asking), 'Why me?'"

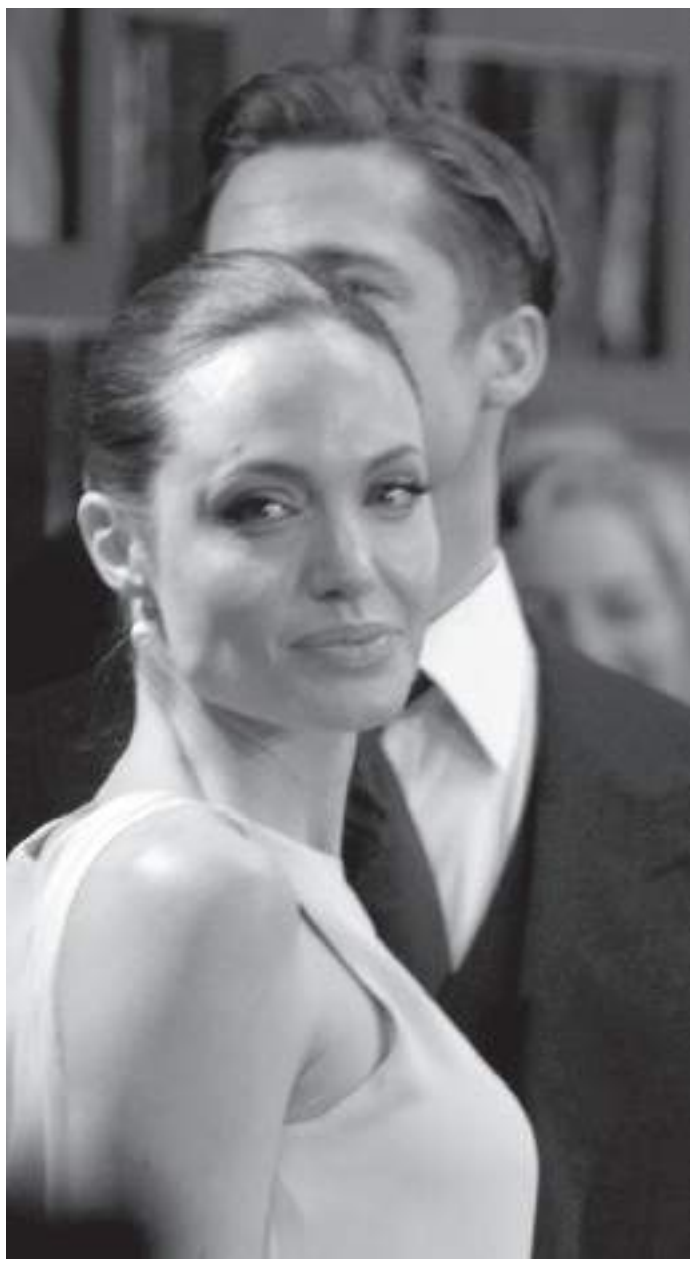
Jolie thinking about brief return to film

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Angelina Jolie, who has been lying low since the birth of her 5-month-old twins, is thinking about a brief return to film, but very brief.

The "Changeling" star and mother of six—twins Vivienne and Knox were born last July—says she'll be in front of the camera early this year. The 33-year-old actress didn't say what projects she may be working on.

"I have had a year off, and I may work for a few months," Jolie says. "But if I do, I'm probably going to take another year and a half or two. I'm going to work a lot less."

Jolie and her partner Brad Pitt attended the 14th annual Critics' Choice Awards at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium on Thursday night.


AP

Angelina Jolie, foreground, and Brad Pitt arrive at the 14th Annual Critics' Choice Awards on Thursday Jan. 8, 2009 in Santa Monica, Calif.

Ferrell says his Bush on Broadway will surprise

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (AP)—Will Ferrell says audiences should expect the unexpected from his upcoming one-man Broadway show and HBO special about President George W. Bush.

Ferrell

Ferrell, known for his Bush impersonation on "Saturday Night Live," said Friday there's nothing derivative about the production. He says it will surprise people with its twists and turns and what it has to say about Bush.

Executive producer Adam McKay says the show aims to be funny but also hold the Bush administration's feet to the fire.

McKay and Ferrell spoke to the Television Critics meeting in the Los Angeles area by satellite from New York.

"Will Ferrell: You're Welcome America. A Final Night with George W. Bush" is set to begin previews Jan. 20 and open Feb. 5. It will air live on HBO March 14.

AP

Actor Tony Shalhoub speaks at the opening of RDI Stages in Milwaukee, Thursday Jan. 8, 2009, in an effort to support Wisconsin's tax incentives for filmmakers.

Shalhoub looks to life after 'Monk'

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Actor Tony Shalhoub says as much as he loves Adrian Monk, eight years portraying the obsessive-compulsive private investigator is enough for him.

The second half of the seventh season of "Monk" began airing Friday on the USA Network, and the Green Bay native will start shooting the last season in March.

"It's a great job, and I work with great people, and I really enjoy doing the character, but I think eight years is enough," he said in a phone interview Thursday. "I think we've kind of explored all the avenues we could possibly cover, and as much as I like the show and working on it, I really do want to think about moving onto whatever the next chapter might be."

Shalhoub appeared Thursday evening at the opening of RDI Stages in Milwaukee as a way to support Wisconsin's tax incentives for filmmakers.

Shalhoub also produces "Monk" and said he wants to produce more after the detective show ends.

"I think I want to keep acting, but I want to branch out and maybe be a producer on things I'm not acting in," he said.

He's on a three-month hiatus from the show now and will start filming his part in the independent film "Feed the Fish" next month in Wisconsin.

Shalhoub has won three Emmys and a Golden Globe for his work on "Monk" and is nominated for another Golden Globe in the ceremony that airs Sunday.

Curious boyfriend gets more information than he wanted

DEAR ABBY: After many years of being single, I met a woman I'll call "Trish" on a blind date. We're both in our late 40s, and we hit it off. We have many things in common.

One night I was at her place when she received a phone call. Trish made it short and sweet and hung up. A few minutes later, I asked who it was, and she told me it was her boss. Abby, I know how she answers the phone when it's her boss—and it wasn't him. When I said, "That was NOT your boss," she admitted it was one of her boss's clients, but said nothing was going on between them.

When I first met Trish, she mentioned that a client had come in one day, had wine and cheese, then leaned over and kissed her. It's the same guy that called—and he's married.

I am very hurt. We have both been cheated on. I don't think she has cheated, but she lied to my face. My first instinct is to dump her, but I love her. What should I do?

HURT IN VERMONT

DEAR HURT: Are you and Trish in a committed relationship? If not, you had no right to question her about who was calling.

That said, a person who would lie to you once would lie to you twice. Listen to your gut. She may not be having a physical affair, but something is going on or she wouldn't have tried to mislead you about who was on the phone.

DEAR ABBY: Ever since I was a child, when my mother gave me a gift, as I opened it she would always say that she had bought a bigger, better or prettier gift for me—but liked it so much she decided to keep it for herself.

Once she told me that she had purchased a jacket for me, but kept it even though she is several sizes smaller than I am. After wearing it a few times, she offered it to me because it was "too big for her."

My mother was the oldest of six children, and I am her only child. Why do you think she behaves as she does?

WOUNDED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR WOUNDED: That your mother feels the need on every special occasion to tell you that she comes first indicates that something within herself is missing. As the oldest of six children, was her childhood deprived in some way? Is this her only eccentricity, and is she an ideal mother the rest of the year? I find it sad that your mother is unable to give with a generous heart. If she's this way with a gift, it follows that she must be this way about other things, too.

DEAR ABBY: The other night, some friends and I were visiting and telling stories. In one story, I used the word "sneaked," and everyone corrected my grammar saying that "snuck" is the correct form and "sneaked" is not a word. I disagree.

I hear people use the word "snuck," but I don't think "snuck" is a word. Who is right?

SECOND-GUESSING MYSELF IN MINNESOTA

DEAR SECOND-GUESSING: "Sneaked" and "snuck" are both words, according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition. "Sneaked," however, is more generally accepted among fussy grammarians like me.

DEAR ABBY: Is it proper for a married woman to go out to eat alone when her husband refuses to take her?

SOLO IN SHERMAN, TEXAS

DEAR SOLO: Absolutely, if she can afford to pay for it and there is enough pet food in the doghouse.

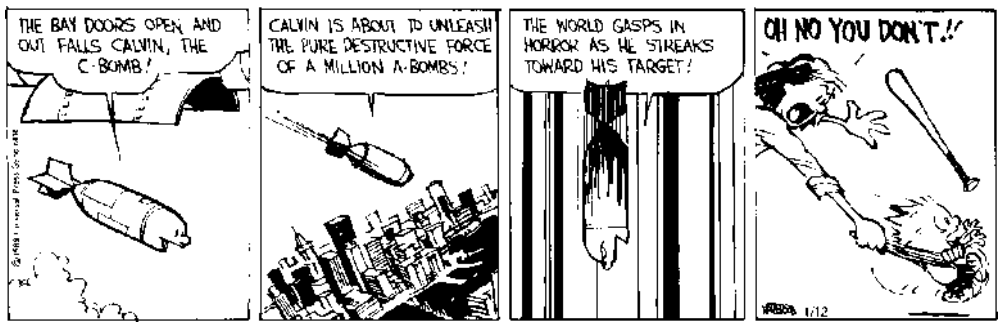
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

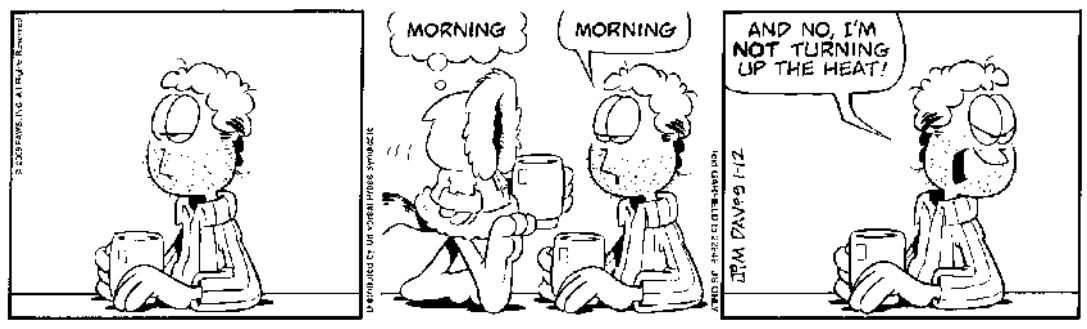
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THE BAY DOORS OPEN AND OUT FALLS CALVIN, THE C-BOMB!
CALVIN IS ABOUT TO UNLEASH THE PURE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE OF A MILLION A-BOMBS!
THE WORLD GASPS IN HORROR AS HE STREAKS TOWARD HIS TARGET!
OH NO YOU DON'T!!

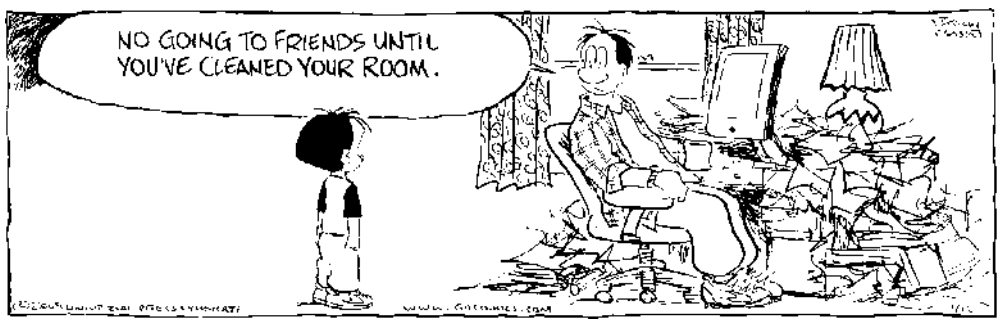
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



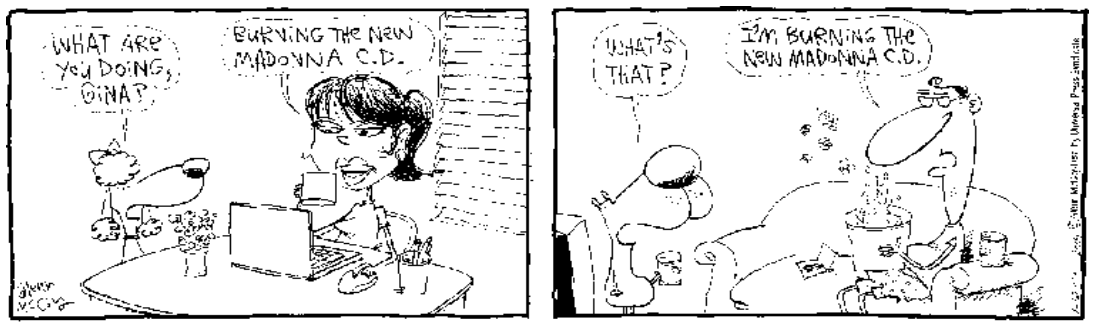
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

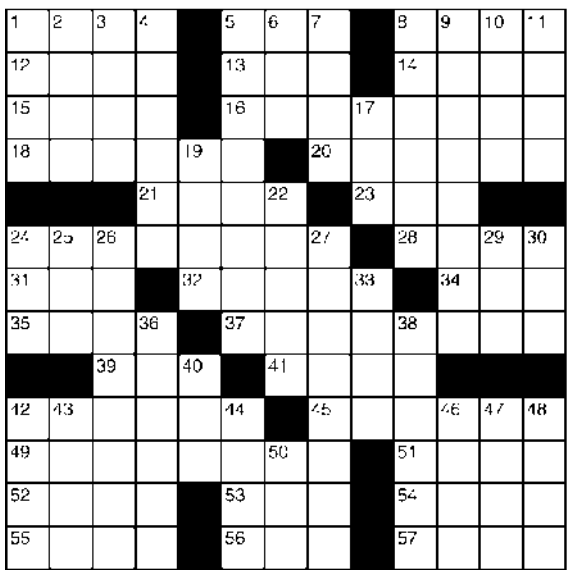
ACROSS
1 Highway
5 Wrestling surface
8 Ego
12 Harvard rival
13 — Khan
14 Nastase of tennis fame
15 And others (Latin)
16 Insisted on
18 Cunning
20 Do relief work
21 Low card
23 Links standard
24 Bearing
28 Carvey or Delany
31 Eggs
32 Tea variety
34 "— Juan"
35 Stroll
37 Narrow-necked bottle
39 Party bowlful
41 Challenge
42 Weakness of a sort
45 Irritate
49 Obama, for one
51 Thailand, once
52 Needing a tiebreaker
53 Square root of IX
54 Opposed to
55 Infamous emperor
56 Joan of —
57 Encounter

DOWN
1 Pumpernickels' kin
2 Inauguration recitation
3 Winged
4 Take out of context?
5 Put into a frenzy
6 Time of your life?
7 Domesticate
8 Mythical sailor
9 Site of fabulous wealth
10 False statements
11 Govt. agents
17 Intensify, with "up"
19 Gift concealer
22 Joined, as oxen
24 Wall Street name
25 Gabor or Peron
26 Seasickness
27 Conducive to courtship
29 Japanese drama
30 — Arbor, Mich.
33 Green land
36 What an obi accessorizes
38 Ship's castoff
40 Snapshot
42 Mideast gulf
43 Actress Carnobel
44 La Scala solo
46 Fork feature
47 Tardy
48 Send forth
50 Atmosphere

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	C	H	U	N	K	■	F	S	C	A	P	E
B	O	U	I	O	N	■	A	P	O	L	L	O
A	I	I	U	R	F	■	R	A	T	T	A	N
G	E	A	R	■	E	R	N	S	■	E	N	S
■	■	■	N	A	M	E	■	M	A	R	■	■
U	P	S	■	P	A	R	D	■	M	E	S	A
S	A	T	U	R	S	A	Y	N	I	G	H	T
A	L	A	S	■	S	I	N	E	■	C	Y	_
■	■	R	E	D	■	S	A	W	S	■	■	■
I	A	W	■	I	T	F	M	■	I	N	T	O
E	L	A	P	S	E	■	I	N	D	C	O	R
A	F	R	I	C	A	■	T	I	L	T	E	D
P	A	S	T	O	R	■	E	P	E	E	S	■

Saturday's answer 1-12



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ or y.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Andy Lawrence, 21; Melanie Chisholm, 35; Rob Zombie, 44; Rush Limbaugh, 58

Happy Birthday: Love can be great as long as you don't let your heart rule your head in important matters. You will be able to do extremely well if you concentrate on building slow and protecting what you already have. Don't be afraid of the unfamiliar but do your research and find out how best to profit first. Your numbers are 7, 12, 14, 22, 26, 38, 43

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You have to stay in control—don't let your anger get the better of you. You can dodge a potentially difficult situation by doing your own thing and being true to your own needs. Put yourself first for a change and you will excel. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Do your research or you won't stand a chance when it comes to getting your way. Love is in the picture but don't let it interfere with what you have to do. Emotional interference will cause you to make mistakes. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Put your time and effort into your home, your position and your future. You can make decisions and changes that will help to ease any stress you've been feeling. Be honest with yourself and your loved ones about what you can and cannot afford. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll be faced with money issues due to unexpected expenses. You can overcome any stress by being fully prepared to make a leap from one way of earning money to another or by adding a second job to your plans for the upcoming months. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't let your emotions cause you to do something foolish. If you think big, you will make a costly mistake. Don't let your generosity turn into your downfall. Budget and save and you will be successful. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Not everyone will be open with you about what is required. Your drive and ability to push the envelope will be impressive. Don't let emotional blackmail stand in your way or lead you astray. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Now is not the time to be lazy if you want to get ahead. Deception regarding an emotional matter will cause you to lose sight of your goals. Shake it off and move on quickly. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't wait for others to do things for you. Fend for yourself and refuse to let anyone take advantage of your abilities. Attend to your own interests or you will not get ahead. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): There may be a deal on the table or an opportunity to collect extra cash but be careful that you aren't hurting someone in the process. Be upfront. You will learn from someone with experience and must be willing to go the distance once you begin. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You have to be smart about the future and the direction you take when so much is at stake and you have so little maneuverability. Now is not the time to expand but rather to structure your holdings and your assets for long-term success. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): A partnership issue will drive you into emotional turmoil. You can make a deal that works for you if you are fair and conservative regarding money, duties and responsibilities. You can fix whatever problem you face. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): There is a lot pending that needs to be resolved in order to move forward. Uncertainty regarding a partnership must be dealt with. Clear the air so you know where you stand and what you can do before you waste any more time. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are conservative but imaginative. You are expressive and emotional. You like a challenge and are inquisitive and fearless.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2	4			9	6		
7								8
6		9		1		2		5
	9		2		1		8	
		6	7		3	5		
	7		4		9		3	
3		1		9		6		2
8								7
	5	7				8	4	

Difficulty Level ★ 1/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	3	4	2	9	1	8	7	5
5	7	2	3	6	8	1	9	4
9	8	1	5	4	7	3	6	2
7	6	3	4	8	2	9	5	1
4	9	8	1	5	6	7	2	3
2	1	5	7	3	9	6	4	8
3	2	6	8	7	4	5	1	9
8	4	9	6	1	5	2	3	7
1	5	7	9	2	3	4	8	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/12

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BIRTHSTONES — Solution: 8 letters

T	M	E	Z	E	E	T	I	N	A	Z	N	A	T	R
C	O	Y	N	O	D	E	C	L	A	H	C	H	E	E
D	O	U	S	I	D	A	Z	A	P	O	T	P	N	C
S	N	L	R	T	R	I	J	L	A	N	S	T	R	N
S	S	O	O	M	I	A	A	P	I	A	Y	O	A	A
N	T	C	M	R	A	C	M	C	J	S	H	D	G	C
G	O	A	P	A	S	I	A	A	S	N	T	I	D	I
I	N	P	O	R	I	J	I	L	U	A	E	R	L	E
S	E	R	P	B	H	D	R	N	U	Q	M	E	A	A
U	E	I	A	I	I	A	O	R	E	U	A	P	R	R
I	Y	C	L	L	E	C	U	A	G	A	I	E	E	G
D	B	O	S	P	R	S	R	O	G	R	I	V	M	I
R	U	R	R	I	N	G	G	E	M	I	N	I	E	F
A	R	N	Z	E	P	C	U	L	T	U	R	E	S	T
S	U	I	R	A	T	T	I	G	A	S	E	I	R	A

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Agate, Amethyst, Aquamarine, Aquarius, Aries Cancer Capricorn, Chalcedony Clear, Colors Cultures, Diamond, Emerald, Garnet, Gemini Gift, Green, Jacinth, Jade, Jasper, Libra List Moonstone, Mystical, Opal, Pearls Peridot Pisces, Ring, Ruby Sagittarius, Sardius, Signs, Tanzanite, Taurus, Topaz, Tourmaline, Virgo, Zircon, Zodiac

Last Saturday s Answer: Aging

CLASSIFIED ADS

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Apartment room for rent. 2 bedroom. Located in Koblerville. $210. Tel: # 288-0728. Yoon Won Suck.

2 bedroom apt., furnished, 24hrs. water supply, safe & quiet neighborhood. Located at Beach Rd., Garapan & Gualo Rai Vill. For inquiries: call 483-2729 or 234-5593

House for long term lease. Location: Capitol Hill, along Isa Drive. 3-Bedrooms, 2-1/2 Bath. Fenced all around with gates. Contact: e-mail: florebalecha@cox.net, Cell: (670) 788-6584.

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, FF, AC, 24-hr pwr./water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. MIHA applicants accepted. Right behind NMC campus. Special rates for NMC faculty/students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

For rent–Apartment (2 Bedroom)
• Fully furnished, free cable & internet, 24 hrs. water (w/ hot water) • $400./mo. (located in San Vicente across Asin's Mini Mart)
• Call (670) 233-2211/235-5566 for info.

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WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

infefeferno

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Find today's solution in this section

WHATZIT Solution: Too many irons in the fire

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, : CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-256

Plaintiff,

-v-

The Estate of BENEDICTO ANGAILEN LIMES,

Defendant.

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on January 23, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot No. 015 D 029,, situated in China Town, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 971 square meters, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys official cadastral plat no. 015 D 00.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 23, 2009, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Office of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 16th day of December, 2008:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at LawP.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Petitioner
EDWARD B. FLORES

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In The Matter of the Adoption of SARA DELFINA WENIO FLORES, a minor child

By, EDWARD B. FLORES, Petitioner.

FCD-AD CIV. ACTION NO. 08-0731FCD

NOTICE OF HEARING

TO: ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

Notice is hereby given that Edward B. Flores has filed a verified Petition for the adoption of a minor child in the Commonwealth Superior Court. The original petition is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar, P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A hearing on the above-entitled matter will be held on January 26, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Superior Court, Susupe Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 29th days of December, 2008.

/s/ Clerk of Court

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Office Hours: 8:30am to 5:30pm M-F daily
Saipan Tribune

Shell
North Pacific Islands

Shell Marianas is seeking a reliable and conscientious candidate to join our team of professionals as a:

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The main responsibilities of this position will be to safely deliver petroleum products to Customers and Service Stations by operating and maintaining the safe condition of tanker trucks. The successful candidate must be properly licensed to operate heavy goods vehicles; must have a minimum of three (3) years experience operating heavy goods vehicles, and have excellent communication skills.

Qualified and interested individuals may apply by completing and submitting applications with a current Traffic Clearance/Record no later than January 13, 2009, to:

Shell Marianas
Attn: Depot Manager
Industrial Highway
Puerto Rico, Saipan

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Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Cardinals stun Panthers to reach NFC title game

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Arizona Cardinals were expected by most to be easy prey in another futile trip to the East Coast. Instead, Kurt Warner and the Cardinals are a victory away from their first Super Bowl appearance—with a big assist from Jake Delhomme and the bumbling Carolina Panthers.

The once discarded Warner was steady in a 33-13 rout of the Panthers on Saturday night, throwing two touchdown passes, while Delhomme threw five interceptions and lost a fumble.

The target of jokes for years with their history of ineptitude, the Cardinals became the last NFC team to reach the conference championship since the 1970 merger with a win few saw coming.

Entering as a 10-point underdog and ridiculed for their 0-5 record in the Eastern time zone this season, Arizona (11-8) raced to a 27-7 halftime lead and cruised past the mistake-prone Panthers (12-5), who were the league's only unbeaten team at home in the regular season.

Instead, Delhomme turned in a brutal performance on his 34th birthday. Just one shy of the NFL playoff record for interceptions, Delhomme became the first player to have five picks in the playoffs since Oakland's Rich Gannon in the 2003 Super Bowl against Tampa Bay.

He completed only 17 of 34 passes for 205 yards and one touchdown. His woes made Steve Smith a non-factor. The Pro Bowl receiver didn't have his first catch until the final minute of the third quarter.

Smith caught a meaningless 8-yard touchdown pass from Delhomme with 50 seconds left, when the Cardinals had already begun looking forward to either visiting the New York Giants or hosting Philadelphia on Jan. 18.

Arizona had been embarrassed when they ventured far from home, but the closest they came was a 27-23 loss here in October when the Cardinals blew a two-touchdown lead.

There would be no suspense this time.

While Pro Bowl receiver Anquan Boldin (hamstring) sat out, Fitzgerald more than made up for the loss. The 6-foot-3 receiver had eight catches for a team playoff-record 166 yards while shredding the Panthers' leaky secondary.

The Cardinals' defense stopped Carolina's potent running game, too. A week after shutting down Atlanta's Michael Turner, DeAngelo Williams was held to 63 yards in a crushing loss for the Panthers, the No. 2 seed in the NFC who had visions of reaching their third NFC title game in six years.

Instead, Warner stole the stage. A decade after his storybook MVP season in winning the Super Bowl with St. Louis a year after he was teammates with Delhomme in NFL Europe, the 37-year-old Warner has another team on the brink of a most unlikely title.

And it was a stunningly ugly performance by Delhomme.

Entering with a 5-2 postseason record, Delhomme's 95.0 playoff passer rating coming in was better than any other quarterback in this season's playoffs.

But Delhomme threw two interceptions and lost a fumble in the first half, making poor reads, holding the ball too long and giving the Cardinals great field position.

Defensive end Antonio Smith stripped Delhomme and recovered the ball at the Carolina 13 late in the first quarter. Two plays later Edgerrin James' 4-yard touchdown put the Cardinals ahead to stay 14-7.

Next possession, rookie Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie picked off Delhomme at the goal line, leading to the first of four field goals by Neil Rackers.

Delhomme started hearing boos when he was intercepted by Gerald Hayes midway through the second quarter. Warner turned that into another touchdown, finding a streaking Fitzgerald for a 29-yard pass for a stunning 27-7 halftime lead that silenced the once towel-waving crowd.

It was a horrible performance for the Panthers in front of their ailing owner. Jerry Richardson visited with Smith on the field before the game before watching from a suite as he awaits a heart transplant that's limited his daily activities and halted his travel on the road with the team.

The Panthers played like the only unbeaten team at home in the regular season for only the opening drive. Williams had a 31-yard run, setting up rookie Jonathan Stewart's 9-yard touchdown scamper for a 7-0 lead.

Ravens 13, Titans 10

In Nashville, Tennessee, as grudge matches go, this was worthy of the WWE. The Baltimore Ravens survived 13-10 against the Tennessee Titans on Saturday thanks to Matt Stover's 43-yard field goal with 53 seconds remaining.

Two teams with an extreme dislike for each other never stopped pounding it out in the wind and rain.

The difference: Baltimore forced three turnovers and never gave away the ball.

And when Joe Flacco led a 51-yard drive in the dying minutes to set up Stover's winning kick, the Ravens (13-5) were headed to the AFC championship game. Led by the first rookie quarterback to win two playoff games, the Ravens will play at Pittsburgh or San Diego next week for the right to go to the Super Bowl.

Baltimore's postseason run looks eerily similar to when it won the championship after the 2000 season. Back then, it also was a wild card and also won in Tennessee on the way to the title.

This victory was engineered by a brutal defense that forced mistakes by the Titans (13-4), who had the league's best record this season.

It was so rugged that the highlight-reel play was All-Pro linebacker Ray Lewis' explosive second-quarter hit on Titans fullback Ahmard Hall near the sideline. Hall's helmet flew off and both players began jawing at each other.

The nasty words never stopped flowing. But the Ravens backed it up with just enough points, climaxed by the winning kick from the last member of the Ravens who played when the franchise was in Cleveland.

The 40-year-old Stover also made a 21-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter for a 10-7 lead.

Rob Bironas kicked a 27-yard field goal with 4:23 left in regulation to tie it at 10.

Then, the unflappable Flacco connected with Todd Heap on a 23-yard pass on third down, eventually leading to the winning kick.

Flacco almost had a major blunder on Baltimore's next-to-last series when he nearly stepped out of the back of the end zone while passing. Few replays were shown at LP Field, and Titans coach Jeff Fisher dismissed the play afterward.

"We lost as a result of our own self-inflicted mistakes," he said. "We just didn't take advantage of our opportunities today."

Tennessee, a plus-14 in turnover margin while winning the AFC South, wasted a half-dozen scoring opportunities with errors. One came on Samari Rolle's interception at the Ravens 12 on a popup Kerry Collins threw under pressure from a blitz in the second period. Another was Collins' fourth-down fumble in Baltimore territory, which the quarterback recovered.

Arizona Cardinals' Larry Fitzgerald (11) reaches the ball over the goal line for a touchdown as Carolina Panthers' Chris Harris (43) defends during the second quarter of an NFL divisional playoff football game in Charlotte, N.C., Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009.

AP

NFL BRIEFS

Jets to interview Ravens DC Ryan in Baltimore

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Jets will interview Baltimore Ravens defensive coordinator Rex Ryan on Sunday about their coaching vacancy, a person familiar with the search told The Associated Press. Jets officials, including owner Woody Johnson and general manager Mike Tannenbaum, will speak with Ryan in Baltimore, according to the person, who requested anonymity because the individual wasn't authorized to discuss the search to replace the fired Eric Mangini. Ryan's stock has steadily risen with the Ravens' postseason success. His defense forced three turnovers in Baltimore's 13-10 victory at Tennessee on Saturday. The Ravens will play at either Pittsburgh or San Diego next week for the right to go to the Super Bowl.

L.T. officially listed as doubtful

SAN DIEGO (AP)—LaDainian Tomlinson was officially listed as doubtful by the San Diego Chargers on Friday, two days before they play at Pittsburgh in the AFC divisional playoffs. Tomlinson himself said he was doubtful two days earlier, and there's a growing expectation that the 2006 NFL MVP won't play due to a detached tendon in his groin. "I'm going to hold out hope, but I don't know if that's realistic," coach Norv Turner said. Tomlinson played just over a quarter in Saturday night's 23-17 overtime win against the Indianapolis Colts before the injury forced him to the sideline after he scored on a 3-yard run. Turner said there was no need to rule Tomlinson out before Sunday. "I don't think we need to do that because he is feeling better, and if he gets up Sunday and he's feeling good, we may want him to be one of the 45," Turner said.

Pacman: 'I might be back in Dallas' in 2009

NEW YORK (AP)—Adam "Pacman" Jones suggested Saturday his days with the Dallas Cowboys may not be over. In an interview on CBS' NFL pregame show, the oft-troubled cornerback said that not only does he expect to play football next season, "I think I might be back in Dallas." Host James Brown then asked: "And you have an inkling that Jerry Jones will give you another shot?" Jones grinned and said, "Yeah, I do," but didn't offer any details to back his assertion. Cowboys spokesman Rich Dalrymple said the team had no comment. Dallas released Jones on Wednesday after a turbulent season in which he was suspended six games for an off-field scuffle and made little impact on the field. The Cowboys had traded for Jones despite the cornerback's suspension for the 2007 season after multiple incidents while with the Tennessee Titans. On Oct. 7, Jones got into a scuffle with a bodyguard who was part of a team-employed security detail.

Jazz waltz to eighth straight win over Pistons

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Mehmet Okur scored 20 of his 22 points in the first half against his former team and the Utah Jazz beat the Detroit Pistons for the eighth straight time, 99-82 on Saturday night.

Andrei Kirilenko had 11 points and seven rebounds, and Matt Harpring also scored 11 points to help the Jazz sweep the Pistons for the fourth straight season.

Rodney Stuckey led the Pistons with 19 points. Allen Iverson added 11 points and five assists for Detroit, which last beat Utah in March 2005.

Paul Millsap finished with nine points and seven rebounds, ending his streak of 19 straight double-doubles as he rested once Utah put away Detroit with a 22-3 run over the end of the third period and beginning of the fourth.

The Pistons were coming off a 93-90 win at Denver on Friday night and never held a lead on Saturday. Jason Maxiell was the only other Detroit player to score in double figures with 11 points—and five of those came in the fourth quarter as the reserves for both teams ran out the clock with the game already decided.

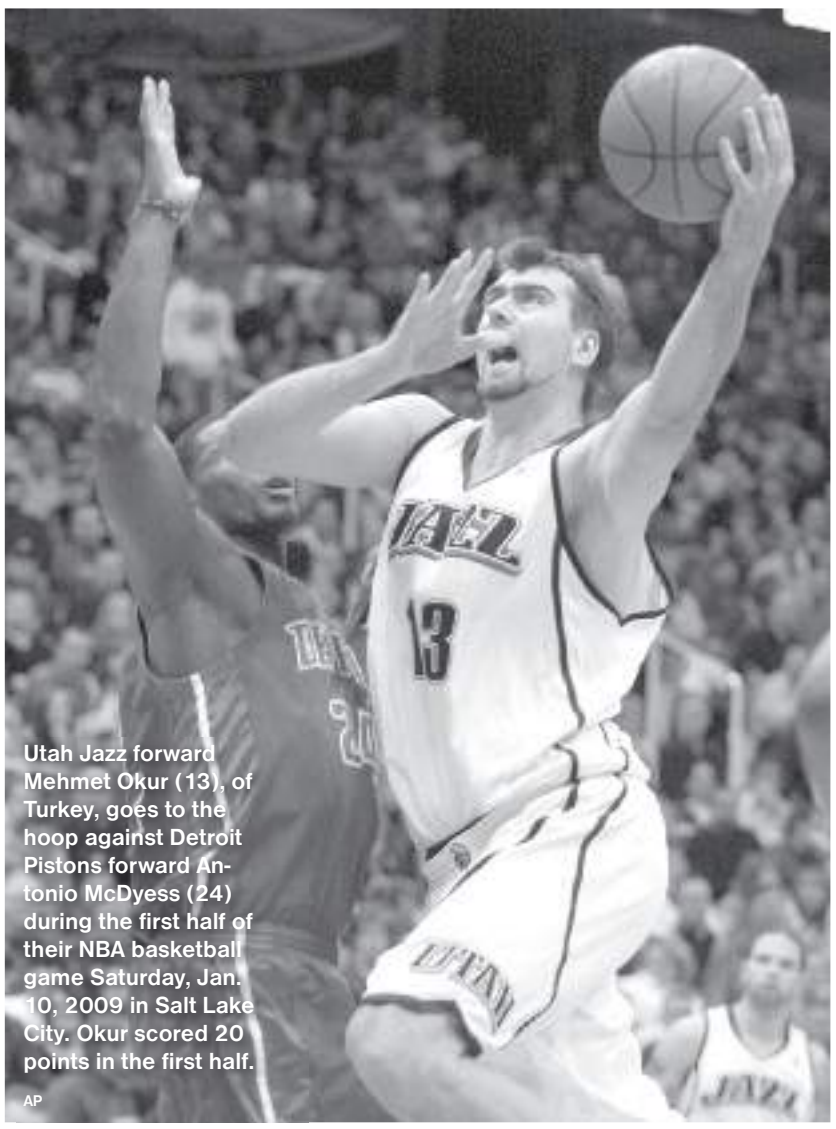
Ronnie Brewer finished with 16 points, and Deron Williams, who has been fighting a cold, added nine assists and watched the end with the rest of the Jazz starters.

The game turned into a rout quickly at the end of the third quarter and beginning of the fourth.

Rasheed Wallace banked in a shot and Tayshaun Prince followed with a 3-pointer to get Detroit within 70-64 late in the third quarter, but the Jazz closed the period by scoring the next nine points. Millsap started it with a dunk, Brewer made a jumper and Kirilenko made a free throw with 1:06 left after drawing Wallace's fourth foul.

Iverson started the third with a jumper for the Pistons, but Harpring scored the next six points, tipping in a rebound and then driving for a left-handed layup that put Utah up 85-66 and prompted a timeout by the Pistons with 9:59 left to play.

It did little to slow down the Jazz. After Iverson went 1-for-2 from the line, Ronnie Price hit a 3-pointer and had an assist to Kosta Koufos for a dunk on the next possession. Brevin Knight started the play with a pass to Kirilenko, who bounced the ball to Price at the baseline and Price found Koufos for the two-handed dunk on the backpedaling Pistons.



Utah Jazz forward Mehmet Okur (13), of Turkey, goes to the hoop against Detroit Pistons forward Antonio McDyess (24) during the first half of their NBA basketball game Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009 in Salt Lake City. Okur scored 20 points in the first half.

AP

Wolves 106, Bucks 104

In Minneapolis, Randy Foye scored 10 of his 11 points in the fourth quarter and the Minnesota Timberwolves rallied from 13 points down in the second half for a thrilling 106-104 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday night.

Rodney Carney scored 22 points, and Sebastian Telfair had 17 points and 11 assists for the Wolves, who have won five in a row for the first time since December 2005.

Michael Redd scored 32 points for Milwaukee, but missed a chance to tie it in the final 9 seconds. Richard Jefferson added 29 points for the Bucks.

Thunder 109, Bulls 98, OT

In Chicago, Kevin Durant scored 28 points, Nick Collison added a season-high 21, and Oklahoma City rallied to beat Chicago.

Trailing by seven midway through the fourth quarter, Oklahoma City had a chance to win it at the end of regulation, but Durant missed jumper from the top of the key and Russell Westbrook missed a tip-in try.

Ben Gordon led Chicago with 22 points.

Rockets 96, Knicks 76

In Houston, Luis Scola had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Rafer Alston added 17 points and six assists for undermanned Houston.

Aaron Brooks scored 16 points, Von Wafer had 15 and Yao Ming 14 for the Rockets, who played without Tracy McGrady and Ron Artest. Tim Thomas led New York with 18 points.

Bobcats 92, Wizards 89

In Washington, Raja Bell had 19 points, and Boris Diaw scored eight of his 18 points in the fourth quarter for Charlotte.

After trailing most of the game, the Bobcats took the lead for good on Shannon Brown's 3-pointer with 2:42 left. Caron Butler had 19 points for Washington.

Grizzlies ignore threat, sign Miles

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—The Memphis Grizzlies re-signed forward Darius Miles on Saturday despite a threat of legal action by the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Trail Blazers sent an e-mail to executives around the NBA this week concerning Miles. On Friday, team president Larry Miller said the Blazers took action because of talk that teams were considering signing the forward to hurt Portland financially.

Miles is coming back from major knee surgery. If he plays two more games, Portland will be on the hook for the $18 million left on his contract. That would count against its salary cap and force the team to pay luxury tax.

Memphis, which waived Miles on Wednesday, signed him to a 10-day contract. General manager Chris Wallace insists Miles can be a plus.

"Darius did everything asked of him in his initial stint with the Grizzlies and was well received by his teammates," Wallace said. "In the last Minnesota game, his length, experience, rebounding, shot blocking and defense on one of the elite post scorers in the league, Al Jefferson, were all impressive. Our young team is short on frontcourt players and can use a veteran with his attributes."

Miller sent an e-mail to fellow NBA executives Thursday night, aware that Miles was set to clear waivers the next day.

"We were hearing a lot of rumblings and rumors that there were teams out there planning to sign Darius Miles specifically and maliciously to hurt our organization," Miller said on a conference call Friday. "This was our way of responding to that and letting folks know that we were not going to take it sitting down."

Miller defended his tactics, even after the players' union announced plans to file a grievance against the Trail Blazers.

"Our purpose here was not in any way to keep Darius from being able to play," Miller said. "If he can come back and help a team to win and play at a level on the court that helps the team, we have no problem with that at all."

On Saturday night before the Blazers played Golden State, Portland general manager Kevin Pritchard said the Grizzlies' move does not change the team's position.

"We've always said this isn't anything to do with Darius," Pritchard said. "This is about if another team is trying to hurt us, then we have some recourse."

The union said it will "vigorously defend" Miles' rights.

"We are shocked at the brazen attempt by the Portland Trail Blazers to try to prevent Darius Miles from continuing his NBA career," players' association director Billy Hunter said in a statement.

"Their attempt to intimidate the other 29 NBA teams by threatening frivolous litigation merely for signing this capable NBA veteran is a clear violation of the anti-collusion and other provisions of our collective bargaining agreement."

Miller said Trail Blazers executives sent the e-mail with the "sole purpose of protecting our organization." He added that he had informed the league office of the team's intention to send the e-mail.

Miles' contract would become guaranteed for the rest of the season if he plays in 10 games. He already has played in eight—six preseason games for the Boston Celtics, then two games for the Grizzlies before being released.

Ogilvy seizes control at PGA Tour opener

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—A change to the Kona wind Saturday made Kapalua play entirely different in the Mercedes-Benz Championship.

Geoff Ogilvy stayed his same, dominant self.

Even as a half-dozen players made charges up the leaderboard on the best day for scoring on the Plantation course, Ogilvy answered with some superb pitching and three straight birdies on the back nine on his way to an 8-under 65. That gave him a six-shot lead over Justin Leonard and D.J. Trahan, and made everyone else in the winners-only field feels as though they were playing for second.

"I haven't played this course with as many birdies out there as I did today," Ogilvy said. "So I'm glad I had a good one."

It turned the PGA Tour's season-opener into a runaway, although Ogilvy conceded nothing.

AP

Geoff Ogilvy, of Australia, reacts after making a birdie putt on the 9th green of the Plantation Course during the third round of the Mercedes-Benz Championship golf tournament in Kapalua, Hawaii, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009.

He was at 19-under 200 after missing three good birdie opportunities on the closing hole, and was curious to see how he would respond to the largest 54-hole lead of his career.

Leonard made eight birdies over his final 14 holes on his way to a 65, the kind of round that he figured would give him a chance to win. But he never had a good look at the leaderboard until he walked onto the 18th green and saw that Ogilvy was at 19 under.

"It was a little deflating, to say the least," Leonard said.

Ogilvy knows the feeling.

"I've never actually been this far in front before, but I've been this far behind a lot of times," he said. "I've had a lot of deflated looks up at 18. That's the way it goes."

Trahan, who started the third round one shot behind Ogilvy, fell three shots behind after two holes and never got going. He shot 70.

"Three under isn't bad, but when the guy you're playing with starts with the lead and shoots 8 under, obviously you can do a lot better than 3," Trahan said. "He played excellent."

It was the largest 54-hole lead at Kapalua since David Duval led by seven shots in 1999, when he won by nine.

"It's never over until the last hole," Ogilvy said. "I've never had a lead like this going into Sunday, so it will be a new experience for me."

It might be a new course, too.

While the Kona wind brought significant change in club selection, the forecast includes a big thunderstorm approaching the islands, leading the tour to move the starting times up some three hours.

Even so, this is Ogilvy's to lose.

Camilo Villegas had to scramble for a double bogey on the opening hole, rattled off eight birdies in a 10-hole stretch and somehow scraped together a 66. That still left him seven shots behind, along with Davis Love III, Kenny Perry and Anthony Kim, who each had 68.

No one was more frustrated than Ernie Els.

He had a pair of three-putts on the front nine, missed a birdie putt inside 4 feet and finished with 34 putts for a 73. The Big Easy started the day two shots out of the lead, and goes into the final round as an also-ran, 10 shots behind.

Els, Adam Scott (73) and Ryuji Imada (74) were the only players in the 33-man field who failed to break par.

Boo Weekley might have had the best plan to stop Ogilvy.

"Catch him when he gets out of bed," Weekley said. "Kidnap him. Lock him in the trunk."

Ogilvy played smart throughout the day, including his choice of an iron off the 13th tee to play off a level lie in the fairway. His approach to a tricky pin was 7 feet right of the flag, and he made that to begin a pivotal run of birdies.

He drove to the edge of the 14th green for a simple up-and-down birdie, and hit one of several superb pitch shots from right of the 15th green for his third straight birdie. That stretched his lead to seven shots, and it might have been more except for missing two birdie putts inside 10 feet.

Ghasias Brothers take first 'Gorilla Games'

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REPORTER

Ghasias Brothers picked up where they left off drawing first blood in the "Gorilla Games" in the World Organized Rocball Community League Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

"Gorilla Games" is a side event for the Rocball league, which concluded early this month with Ghasias Brothers topping the Fanians in the best-of-three title series, 2-0.

After their finals win, Ghasias Brothers earned the right to play in the first match in the 'Gorilla Games."

The first challenger were the Okies, who pushed Ghasias Brothers to the limits before the latter pulled off a 108-84 double overtime win and take the $50 pot money.

Ghasias Brothers behind Freddie Pelisamen won the first two sets, 25-10, 26-22, while Okies swept the last two, 27-25, 25-22.

After four regular sets, Ghasias Brothers still led, 98-84, but they could not take the outright win. Rocball rules only allow a leading team to win the match if it also prevails in the fourth set.

If the leading team lost the fourth set, the game will go in overtime with the trailing squad needing to win twice to steal the match. The leading team needs only one victory to wrap up the game.

An overtime set can be won by the first team to score 10 points or a goal. The Okies took the second option, scoring their lone goal of the night en route to a 4-0 victory in the first set overtime.

The win allowed Okies to force a second overtime set, which Ghasias finally won, 10-6, to end the match and send the Okies packing for a long vacation.

In Gorilla Games rules, rocball creator James Feger said losing teams need to take a month-long break before being eligible to challenge the current winner of the tournament.

Feger added that 'Gorilla Games" will be played every two weeks on Saturday night between 6pm to 7pm at the MHS Gymnasium.

Freddie and brother Ben emerged as the heavy hitters of the first "Gorilla Games" firing 23 points apiece. Freddie had two aces, seven kees, one xunk, and a goal, while Ben made fives kees, three goals, two aces, and a xunk.

Ghasias Brothers' Freddie Pelisamen leaps for a kill during their title game against the Fanians in the Rocball league early this month at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. Ghasias Brothers opened the action in the "Gorilla Games" Saturday and beat the Okies.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

LADY

From Page 28

and Tacliad made it into the scoreboard for MHS in the first quarter.

Southern had an anemic start with Janina Maratita and Wilani Sikyang making only one basket apiece allowing the Lady Dolphins to take a 15-4 lead.

Nothing had changed for the Manta Rays in the second quarter, as far as their offense was concerned, as they had another four-point performance in that period.

The Lady Dolphins slowed down a bit in the second canto drilling only seven points, but still took a double-digit lead at halftime, 22-8.

The brief break gave the Dolphins time to regain their shooting touch en route to a 16-point output in the third period.

For the Lady Rays, their miseries on offense continued in the third, as they tallied only one fieldgoal and a free throw.

Southern scored its biggest points in the fourth—six markers—but still way of the mark of the Lady Dolphins, who had a breakout game in the final canto firing 21 points.

With Rangamar and Wonenberg playing beautiful music with MHS' old stalwarts, coach Jose Tumaquip is hoping to bring the title back to the Lady Dolphins.

MHS lost to the Chelsea-Ruluked led Lady Ayuyus in last season's finals.

Ruluked had moved to the mainland mid last year, but the Lady Ayuyus are still favored to make it to the finals.

The defending champion opened the season Wednesday night and defeated Mt. Carmel School, 52-42.

Scores:

MHS 59—Rangamar 15, Palero 15, Pagarao 10, Tacliad 8, Wonenberg 7, Guzman 2, Benavente 2.

SSHS 17—Sikyang 6, Mediola 5, Maratita 2, Duenas 2, Castro 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-4, 22-8, 38-11, 59-17

BASKETBALL

From Page 28

Cruz of the G-Stars was also a force in the finals, firing 33 points in their 86-77 win over Rollers A.

The member of the CNMI Junior National Team played only three games before the finals but still compiled 78 points for an average of 13 points per match.

Tsunami Saipan and Saipan Swim Club split the Female Athlete and Male Student Athlete of the Month awards.

SSC's Grace Kimball took the Female Athlete of the Month honors after claiming seven gold medals in the 2008 Guam Swimming Federation International Meet in Hagatna last month.

The 13-year-old Kimball won in the 50m backstroke, 100m breaststroke, 200m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 100m freestyle, 400m freestyle, and 50m freestyle swims in the girls' 13 to 14 age group.

Tsunam Saipan's Staal also competed in Guam last month and set four new records in the boys' 13 to 14 age group.

Staal shattered his own mark in the 200m freestyle (2:07.16) timing in at 2:07.15 in Guam.

Staal's second record-breaking swim came in the 400m freestyle, posting 4:34.13, which surpassed the 13-year mark of Joshua Taitano. Taitano's record on August 17, 2005 was 4:35.57.

Staal also set a new mark in the 50m breaststroke clocking in at 35.33 seconds and smashing his own record (35.97).

The Saipan International School student also competed in the 100m breaststroke and completed the race in 1:16.07 to eclipse Wong's record of 1:16.48 (Feb. 17, 2006).

FINANCE

From Page 28

CHC had its best chance to make it to the scoreboard when first baseman Sheena Sablan reached third base. With Sablan on third and Natalie Reyes on second and with two outs, pitcher Meng Yamada swung and hit her target, but was beaten to first base on a 6-3 putout play.

In the next three innings, Finance pitcher Bego Camacho allowed only three hits and had three strikeouts, and the rest of his teammates hustled out for the ball.

Finance improved to a 3-4 record, while CHC dropped to a 1-5 slate.

Centerfielder Liz Lebria was perfect at the plate for Finance, hitting 3-for-3 and making a solo homer in the fourth inning. Charlene Cabrera connected on the other homer of the match with her roundtripper in the third inning.

MEN'S
No Zone 22, PSS 5

In the men's division, No Zone also had a walk in the park against Public School System cruising to a 22-5 victory.

It was No Zone's seventh win in nine games putting the team in a tie for third place with the Joeten Motor Jets. PSS remained at the bottom half of the 20-team field with its 2-6 slate.

Ned and Bruce Norita was spotless at-bat going 4-for-4 with the latter scoring six RBIs. Bruce also had two doubles, while Ned had a solo homer in the fifth inning and three RBIs.

No Zone had a field day in the first two innings making six at the top of the first and 10 runs in the second. It added four in the third, was shut out in the fourth and nailed two in the fifth.

The most that PSS could score was two runs in both the third and fourth inning. It failed to score in the first and fifth inning, and was held to a run in the second.

PIC 13, Customs 8

In the last game of the night, Pacific Island Club shut out Customs in the last two innings to eke out a 13-8 win.

PIC was leading by only one, 9-8, after five complete innings, when pitcher Rueben Olgeriil allowed only one hit, walked one, and had one error to preserve the victory.

On offense, Olgeriil made a two-run double at the bottom of the sixth inning allowing PIC to widen the lead, 13-8. Olgeriil and Tommy Kennington scored the two other runs for PIC.

At the top of the seventh, the closest that Customs could get was on first base. The first two batters flied out, third baseman Ray Renguul singled, but was stranded on first, as fourth batter and second baseman Vince Sablan flied out.

PIC gained only its second win in eight games tying their victim, PSS, and CHC, for the 15th to 17th place in the team standings.

STAAL

From Page 28

new mark in the 100m breaststroke, timing in at 1:10.72, it was enough to move him to the finals.

"It was amazing because no swimmer from Saipan or Guam has advanced to the finals in this event in the history of JPP," Kimura said.

In the finals, Wong raced against the U.S. Nicholas D'Innocenzo and Stuart Ferguson, Japan's Akihiro Yamaguchi, China's Jianjia Xue, and Australia's Jeremy Meyer and Bogdan Knezevic.

This time, Wong swam faster than his personal best time, clocking in at 1:09.86. The Marianas High School student could have set a new CNMI National Mark, but his time was not considered an official record, as he was disqualified in the finals due to an illegal downward dolphin kick.

According to FINA rules, the downward dolphin kick is not permissible prior to the arm pull. During, or at the end of the arm pull of the first stroke after the start and after each turn, a single downward dolphin kick is allowed, but not required, followed by a breaststroke kick. During the arm pull, if a downward dolphin kick is taken, it must be followed by a breaststroke kick. It is not permissible to take only a downward dolphin kick without then taking a normal breaststroke kick.

Kimura did not elaborate on Wong's violation, but said Tsunami is proud that Rezne is capable of breaking the 1.10.00-barrier in the 100m breaststroke.

"It was sad for him and the CNMI that the record was not officially counted, but we are excited for him because he has the ability to past the 1:10.00 barrier. No swimmer from Saipan or Guam had timed in faster than 1:10.00," the Tsunami Saipan coach said.

Friday evening, Wong and Staal teamed up with Cooper Graf and Shin Kimura in the 800m freestyle relay and raced against Australia, Japan, U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Chine, and Guam.

Swimmers Down Under won the gold, while Japanese and American swimmers took the silver and bronze medals, respectively. The CNMI bets finished eighth.

Tsunami Saipan swimmers are set to compete in six more events in the JPP.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	29	9	.763	_
New Jersey	18	19	.486	10 1/2
Philadelphia	16	20	.444	12
Toronto	16	21	.432	12 1/2
New York	13	22	.371	14 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	29	8	.784	_
Atlanta	22	13	.629	6
Miami	19	16	.543	9
Charlotte	14	24	.368	15 1/2
Washington	7	29	.194	21 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	29	6	.829	_
Detroit	22	13	.629	7
Milwaukee	18	21	.462	13
Chicago	16	21	.431	14
Indiana	13	23	.361	16 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	24	11	.686	_
New Orleans	22	11	.667	1
Houston	24	15	.615	2
Dallas	22	14	.611	2 1/2
Memphis	11	26	.297	14

Northwest Division

Denver	25	13	.658	_
Portland	22	14	.611	2
Utah	22	15	.595	2 1/2
Minnesota	11	25	.306	13
Oklahoma City	5	31	.139	19 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	29	6	.829	_
Phoenix	20	13	.606	8
Golden State	10	28	.263	20.5½
L.A. Clippers	8	28	.222	21 1/2
Sacramento	8	29	.216	22

Yesterday's Games

Charlotte 92, Washington 89
Minnesota 106, Milwaukee 104
Houston 96, New York 76
Oklahoma City 109, Chicago 98, OT
Utah 99, Detroit 82
Portland 113, Golden State 100

MERCEDES-BENZ CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—Scores Saturday from the Mercedes-Benz Championship, a $5.6 million (4.1 million euros) U.S. PGA Tour event at the 7,411-yard, par-73 (36-37) Plantation Course at Kapalua Resort:

Third Round

Geoff Ogilvy	67 -68 -65	200
Justin Leonard	74 -67 -65	206
D.J. Trahan	70 -66 -70	206
Camilo Villegas	74 -67 -66	207
Davis Love III	69 -70 -68	207
Kenny Perry	68 -71 -68	207
Anthony Kim	71 -68 -68	207
K.J. Choi	71 -71 -66	208
Boo Weekley	70 -70 -69	209
Johnson Wagner	68 -71 -70	209
Zach Johnson	71 -75 -64	210
Sean O'Hair	69 -70 -71	210
Ernie Els	68 -69 -73	210
Will MacKenzie	72 -70 -69	211
Dustin Johnson	72 -72 -68	212
Brian Gay	72 -70 -70	212
Stewart Cink	74 -67 -71	212
Greg Kraft	72 -73 -68	213
Chez Reavie	75 -70 -68	213
Adam Scott	73 -67 -73	213
Ryuji Imada	69 -70 -74	213
Steve Lowery	69 -75 -70	214
Carl Pettersson	72 -72 -70	214
Cameron Beckman	76 -73 -66	215
Daniel Chopra	79 -69 -67	215
Trevor Immelman	72 -74 -69	215
Parker McLachlin	77 -69 -69	215
Richard S. Johnson	72 -72 -71	215
Vijay Singh	73 -73 -71	217
J.B. Holmes	74 -75 -72	221
Marc Turnesa	79 -73 -70	222
Andres Romero	78 -74 -71	223
Ryan Palmer	78 -75 -72	225

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	9	0
CPA	7	1
Freedom Air	7	1
Joeten Motors	7	2
No Zone	7	2
Beach Boys	6	2
Legislature	6	3
DLNR	5	4
Docomo	5	4
POI	4	3
DEQ/CRM	4	5
P & S	3	4
Law & Order	3	6
PSS	2	6
Customs	2	6
CHC	2	6
PIC	2	6
CUC	2	7
Mayors	1	8
Hopwood	0	8

Women's Division

NMC	7	0
DCCA	3	3
Finance	3	4
CUC	2	4
CHC	1	5

The Week in Sports

Basketball players put on a show

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REPORTER

The future kings and queens of basketball court were at center stage last week showcasing their promising talents during the 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymasium.

In the end, three teams stood the tallest among more than 20 squads claiming the championship in the boys and girls' 18-and-under and the boys' 14-and-under divisions.

The Lil'Sonics of coach Jessie Tudela defeated the San Antonio Sixers I in the finals, 83-79, to take the boys' 14-and-under division crown.

The G-Stars prevailed in the boys' 18-and-under finals topping Rollers A, 86-77, while the Lady Knights ruled the girls' division outclassing the Lady Ayuyus, 61-56.

The Lil' Sonics' Max Camacho was named MVP, while Jericho Cruz and Roxanne Duenas claimed the same awards in the 18-and-under division.

The tournament also recognized the Top 5 players in each division and the Top 10 scorers.

The top individual and team performers in the Saipan Billiards Association's Budweiser Open 8-Ball League winter-spring '08 and in the Bud Cup were also cited in a banquet at Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

The PTI Voyagers, who won the Agingan division of the Open 8-Ball, received their championship trophy at the banquet, and were joined by second and third placers Krystal Docomo Hustlers and Round 2's Islanders Rent A Car, respectively. The Hustlers won the Bud Cup.

In the Obyan division, Primo's Home Boys went home with the championship trophy beating Krystal Perfect Spotters (second) and USSP Fotten Palau (third). The Home Boys also prevailed in the Bud Cup.

After a notable 2008, four CNMI's swimmers and a junior tennis player are out to start 2009 with a bang by competing in off-island tournaments.

Tsunami Saipan swimmers Rezne Wong, Kai Staal, Shin Kimura, and Cooper Graf left Saipan Thursday to represent the CNMI in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Guam.

The four Tsunami Sapan swimmers will be competing in nine events in the JPP meet.

CNMI top junior netter Ji Hoon Heo left the island a few days earlier than the Tsunami Saipan swimmers to participate in tournaments in Australia and New Zealand.

Down Under, Heo swept his first two assignments to advance to the Round of 32 in the 2009 Post Margaret Court Cup at the Albury Grasscourts in Albury, New South Wales.

Heo had one more tournament in Australia before going to New Zealand to compete in Cantebury, Auckland, and Wellington.

Back in local events, the 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League resumed action after the holiday break.

The league now plays five times a week to cover make-up games. The first week of action in the annual league saw 10 teams earning wins at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield and the Capital Hill Ballfied.

The list include Commonwealth Utilities, Corp. (women's) and the men's divisions' Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Mayor's Office, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Docomo, CRM/DEQ, Pacific Oriental, Inc., Freedom Air, Joeten Motors Jets, and Legislature.

Over at the Marianas High School Gymnasium, the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization opened the 2008-2009 season of the varsity division of the MISO Basketball League.

Defending women's champion Kagman High School's Lady Ayuyus won the season-opener, downing Mt. Carmel School, 52-42.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Lady Knights' Noelle Calvo, left, pulls up for a shot against a Lady Ayuyus' defender during their title game in the Holiday Hoops at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sonics' Tristan Ecalnea goes for a floater against two Rollers A players during their semis game in the Holiday Hoops at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Ji Hoon Heo in action in one of the local tournaments last year.
SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Shin Kimura, Cooper Graf, and Kai Staal enjoy a light moment during their training session at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Lady Ayuyus' Nikita Hofscheinder's entry pass to a teammate hits a Mt. Carmel School defender during the opening game in the MISO varsity caging at the Marianas High School Gymnasium Wednesday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Primo's Home Boys and their supporters pose with their trophies during the awards banquet for the Saipan Billiards Association's Budweiser Open 8-Ball League at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

A Docomo batter sets his eyes on the target during their game against the Beach Boys at the resumption of action in the 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League last week at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Basketball players put on a show

The future kings and queens of basketball court were at center stage last week showcasing their promising talents during the 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymasium. 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Cardinals stun Panthers to reach NFC title game

The Arizona Cardinals were expected by most to be easy prey in another futile trip to the East Coast. 24

Staal resets record, Wong makes finals

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REPORTER

Tsunami Saipan

Tsunami Saipan swimmers Kai Staal and Rezne Wong debuted strong in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships at the Leo Palace Resort Swimming Pool in Guam Friday.

Staal shattered the CNMI 13 to 14 age group record (57.46 seconds), which he himself set two months ago on Saipan, in the 100m freestyle when he timed in at 57.36 in the preliminary race on Day 2 of the six-day meet.

Tsunami coach Hiro Kimura said the record-breaking performance is a big boost to Staal's bid to break the 50m freestyle mark in the same age group. He added he is confident Staal will break the 25-second barrier in the sprint swim.

Staal's best time in the 50m freestyle is 25.68 seconds (an CNMI age group record) which he posted in the 200m medley free relay swim for Saipan International School during the SSC All Schools meet in November last year.

No CNMI swimmer has yet to finish a 50m freestyle race in 25 seconds. The closest one was Alex Screen, who holds the CNMI National Record of 25.12 seconds, which he made on Aug. 25, 1987.

"I hope we will see a new page in the CNMI swimming history book after Day 4 of the tournament," Kimura said.

Staal was set to compete in the 50m freestyle preliminary races Sunday morning.

Wong also plunged into action on Friday and though he failed to set a

See STAAL on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tsunami Saipan swimmers, from left, Shin Kimura, Rezne Wong, Kai Staal, and Cooper Graf pose for a group photo before seeing action in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships at the Leo Palace Resort Swimming Pool in Guam Friday.

Lady Dolphins pummel Lady Rays

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REPORTER

Marianas High School's Lady Dolphins had a smooth sailing during their debut game in the varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League walloping Saipan Southern High School's Lady Manta Rays, 59-17, Friday night at the MHS Gymnasium.

The Lady Dolphins' firepower was simply too much to handle for the Lady Rays, whose total points were even lower than MHS's production in the fourth quarter alone.

MHS' holdovers Lalaine Pagarao, Ira Palero, and Riza Tacliad delivered as usual for the Lady Dolphins and drew enough contributions from newcomers Lia Rangamar and Jacque Wonenberg.

Rangamar scored 15 points in her debut matching Palero's production, while Pagarao chipped in 10. Tacliad and Wonenberg nailed eight and seven points, respectively.

Rangamar, Palero, Wonenberg,

See LADY on Page 26

The Lady Dolphins' Lalaine Pagarao goes for a left handed layup against a Lady Rays' Ji Ann Kim during their game in the MISO caging Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Basketball players, swimmers are December's best

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

ATHLETES of the MONTH

Youth basketball players and swimmers were voted top athletes for December during the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association meeting Thursday night at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Roxanne Duenas and Jericho Cruz were named NMASA Female Student and Male Athletes of the Month (December) after showing their wares in the 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam Festival.

Duenas played for the Lady Knights in the 18-and-under division of the Holiday Hoops and led her team to a title win over the Lady Ayuyus, 61-56.

Duenas is only 13-years old and was supposed to play in the younger age group, but her skills are just way above her fellow 13-year-old players thus she moved up to the older age group.

Despite going up against much taller foes, Duenas dominated the opposition emerging as the most valuable player of the division and its top scorer. She had 24 points in the finals and tallied a total of 117 markers in five games for an average of 19.5 points per match.

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Duenas

Cruz

Staal

Kimball

Finance blanks CHC in women's softball

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Budweiser SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Finance capitalized on a lethargic Commonwealth Health Center to post a 13-0 shutout win in the women's division game in the 2008 Inter Government/ Business Softball League Friday night at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

CHC had not played in more than a month and was really off in Friday's game, making only four hits and was a step slower getting on bases. Finance had a shorter break and was more active with its defense catching flyballs and beating CHC runners.

Lilian Pangelinan gave Finance a good start connecting on a two-run single at the bottom of the first. Finance scored three more runs to take a 5-0 lead.

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